THE PARADOX OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHER AGENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION: USING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY TO PROMOTE REFLEXIVITY IN TEACHERS AND RAISE CONSCIOUSNESS OF AGENTIC BELIEFS AND VALUES

by

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DEDICATION

To my family: my mother Debra, my partner Erin, and my children Emily and Graham.

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First and foremost, I thank God for their unending love and support. This document is a testament to the gifts I have been trusted with and the experiences I have been brought through by the grace of God. I affirm my faith in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and the awesome call to love others as I was first loved by him.

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I know that this document is not an end, but a beginning. As the great Maxine Greene proclaims “I am forever on the way.” I answer her call, as an artist, educator, and learner, to change the world… for “the arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they can change human beings, who can change the world.”

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."
>
> —Alice Walker

One of the greatest factors of both failure and success is what one *believes* about oneself (Bandura, 1982). This concept is studied across a wide range of disciplines under numerous titles and an amalgamation of related terms. Each iteration adds to the constellation of ideas that form our understanding of an individual's capability to author their own identity.

In philosophy, for example, one can reference the theories of *existentialism* developed by Martin Heidegger (1927) and his contemporaries to understand individuals as *free and responsible agents* who develop their existence through willful acts. In psychology, one can reference the work of Albert Bandura (1982) on *self-efficacy* as one's belief in their ability to achieve goals. In sociology, one can reference the seminal work of Margaret Archer (2003) on both *structure* and *agency* in the debate of one's capability to act within a given environment. These three examples alone employ a wealth of jargon that expand the notion of self-constitution even further.

The reference above to structure and one's ability to act within delineated socio-cultural environments may very well invoke the concept of *autonomy*. Autonomy has evolved extensively from the constitutional work of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes and their conceptualizations of *liberalism* and *individualism*. Individualism, through the work of Albert Bandura and other social psychologists, may be viewed as the tenet to theories of *Self-Determination* and *Social Cognitivism*. From an even broader perspective,

understanding oneself through one's beliefs generates fundamental philosophical conversations on the construction of reality/*ontology*, knowledge/*epistemology*, and value/*axiology*.

What is pivotal in this progenation of theories and concepts is that each perspective utilizes, directly and/or indirectly, a concept of human agency. Agency, in and of itself, yields a rich canon of work across a number of disciplines and multiple fields of study (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Its significance, specifically in research on the constitution of self, however, is its ability to negotiate multiple phenomenological conceptualizations of action and identity across numerous fields *without* losing concernment.

For example, agency has played a provocative role in education, particularly as it pertains to educational reform and the significance of students and teachers as agents of change (Biesta et al. 2014, 2015; Hadar and Benish-Weisman, 2019). The importance of agentic research has just recently been promoted as a formidable topic in educational research. Priestley et al. (2015a) utilize an *ecological approach* to study the concept of teacher agency through qualitative inquiry in their work on curricular school reform in Scotland. The ecological approach posits a temporal construct of agency, first formulated by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), which expresses interdependence between one's iterational (past), practical-evaluative (present), and projective (future) experiences to form agentic understanding and beliefs. This temporal conception of agency is strongly supported by philosophical tenets within the theoretical framework of social realist theory related to Margaret Archer's (1995) work on *morphogenesis.* As argued by Priestley et al. (2015a) in exploring opportunities and strategies for school improvement, we must begin

to appreciate the imperative significance of teachers and their agential beliefs in bringing educational reform to fruition. By probing the role of teacher agency within structures of education, we can discover and codify its requisite components and generative mechanisms. Then, such information can be used to develop methods of identifying variables in professional contexts that support teacher's agential growth and development (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, and Paloniemi, 2013; Hadar and Benish-Weisman, 2019; Lipponen and Kumpulainen, 2011). The present study is located at this crucial juncture in the scholarship of teacher agency.

Through critical reflection of my own professional experiences as a performing arts teacher in Central Texas, which are presented in the study through autoethnographic inquiry, I have discovered the significance and necessity of intrapersonal investigation in authoring one's sense of agency and ultimately affecting one's actions and the environment one acts within. I believe this discovery is not limited to my personal exploration and interpretation of past experiences, but rather, represents a valuable opportunity to shift school reform dialog and focus professional development on the topic of teacher agency with the expressed desire of supporting teachers as agents of change within their unique professional contexts. By promoting teacher agency through agentic dialog and reflexivity, our collective consciousness of agency and its generative mechanism will be raised. Subsequently, our actions will reflect a heightened sense of self in correlation to others, and the concept of reform will be both positioned and realized by teachers and students awakened to their own possibilities and power.

In promoting the significance of teacher agency within the context of educational reform, I would like to briefly investigate some of the philosophical tenets of agency, in

order to fully appreciate its plentitude of ontic and epistemic values which frame agentic conversations and research.

Bringing Agency Into Focus Through a Philosophical Lens

For centuries philosophers have engaged in dialogue regarding the ontological implications of human identity and the internal conversation which constitutes our *sense of agency*. To understand what we believe of ourselves, however, we must begin simply with what we know, or rather, what we believe to be true. From this epistemological perspective, we are challenged by polarized systems that fuel epistemic debate.

Our understanding of the world has long since been divided into opposing poles. In this instance, the polarity lies between *positivistic* and *interpretivistic* perspectives of the world. Applying parallel terms, germane to scientific inquiry, we can refer to these extremes as being understood *objectively* and *subjectively*. Marking out this philosophical territory is not necessarily problematic. But for those who believe reality and knowledge must exist solely in one camp or the other, a great deal of value and meaning is lost from the resultant dialectic of the opposing poles (Scott, 2013). Philosophers have shown us that the neatness of a polarized perception of the world is far too simple to fully appreciate the growing complexities of our existence. What is significant, is the *dialogue* that comes from the polarization of ontic and epistemic theories. Through the maieutic method, humanistic and existential thoughts have emerged. Challenging the Cartesian models of the age of enlightenment within the eighteenth century. Heideggerian continental philosophies have subsequently promoted a *new* sense of agency among nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinkers.

From an agential perspective, the dichotomy of that which is understood as *objective* and *subjective* fuels debate across several disciplines. Archer (2003) suggests, in a very basic sense, that this debate is fundamental in supporting objective perceptions of structure and the subjective nature of agency. A dialogue between the objective and subjective, or structure and agency, begins with the inception of action. Actions are inherently rooted in structural contexts that directly influence the agent who is acting. Conversely, the agent's actions affect and ultimately mold the structural landscape within which the agent acts. In other words, an agent cannot act without experiencing effects from the structure they act in, yet the structure is affected by the actions taken by the actor. Archer's work (1982) suggests a new approach which conceptualizes structures and agents as ontologically inseparable because each enters into the other's constitution. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two through the work of Emirbayer and Mische on the temporality of agency and Archer's theory of morphogenesis. What is established here is the significance of philosophy to carve out territory in which a conversation of agency can mature. A conversation on agency is vital to constructing an understanding of our actions and of ourselves within professional cultural contexts. Where then are the boundaries of this territory, philosophically and pragmatically as we continue to examine the implications of agency on teachers' professional identities?

The Personal and Pragmatic Connection

Entrenched in a rich internal philosophical dialogue, I have been challenged both personally and professionally to evaluate my own sense of agency as a public school teacher. In my studies of pedagogical theories and educational professionalism, I have become an extremely conscientious educator. I rely heavily on the practice of critical

self-reflection to maximize my effectiveness and ultimately author my identity as a successful teacher. I was vexed, however, by the perceived variables of my profession and position (as a public-school performing arts teacher in central Texas) that were out of my sphere of influence and control, which dramatically affected my capabilities to take action in professional contexts. Furthermore, my experiences altered my perceptions, and affected my sense of agency, regardless of established structural elements that promoted autonomy and self-efficacy within my *job* as a teacher (Campbell, 2009; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, and Paloniemi, 2013).

The concept of agency in the constitution of professional identities of public-school teachers is a relatively new conversation, yet extremely valuable in the field of school reform (Biesta et al., 2014, 2015). I realized rather quickly that the experiences I was having as a public-school teacher, who earnestly sought opportunities to affect positive change in my teaching practices and environment, were shared amongst many of my colleagues. These experiences spoke towards a *sense of agency* that developed from *internal dialogue* on my work as a teacher, regardless of structures that were in place to support or hinder my work. I slowly began to understand that many of my actions were constrained by what I *believed* to be my capability to act as an autonomous member of the profession. This had a severely negative impact on the value I generated for my role as a teacher, regardless of conflicting systems and related experiences that were designed to promote individual agency.

In researching teacher agency specifically, I became critical of the methods of analysis that examined socio-cultural structural variables of professional agency for teachers. Such variables had little to no effect on my own sense of agency without a

belief in their significance in context to my own work. Although professional autonomy and self-efficacy can be promoted and supported by an administration and supervisors, *my belief* in those systems was the determining factor in establishing my sense of agency and ultimately my actions as a teacher (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015).

I was often bewildered by the contrast of my colleagues' actions and reactions within particular situations that challenged and subsequently established our individual professional identities. Although several structural variables were kept constant, such as the content we taught, our administrative responsibilities, and our voice and presence in campus decision making, et cetera; I saw a marked difference in our personal perceptions of each experience. Where I was empowered to take action, my colleagues recoiled and denied their ability to act for various perceived structural limitations. Where I perceived professional limitations, my colleagues would roam freely. Although, objectively, we were all situated professionally in the same place, in general, my understanding of many situations empowered my sense of agency, where my colleagues viewed the same situation as lacking in agential value for themselves. Campbell (2009) addresses this in his work on *Distinguishing the Power of Agency from Agentic Power* by explaining that

> …individuals may possess agency [as "the ability to act while"] to a remarkable degree and yet not function as agents in any way whatsoever. Conversely, individuals may function very effectively as agents bringing change to the system and yet do so "unconsciously" as it were, as a mere by-product of instinctive, responsive behavior or habit, and not therefore through an act of will (pp.414-415).

Although I disagree with anatomizing agency into different categories or types of agency, and therefore do not use the terms "power of agency" and "agentic power," conceptually the distinction is appropriate in terms of navigating structural variables and agentic beliefs. In other words, one's consciousness of one's own sense of agency

becomes the most significant generative mechanism for agency within any given socio-political and/or cultural structures.

The Greek philosopher Epictetus is quoted as saying "When something happens, the only thing in your power is your attitude toward it; you can either accept it or resent it. It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters" (from the *Enchiridion* A. D. c. 125). This relates directly to a growing body of work that focuses on teacher professional beliefs (Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson, 2015). Priestley (2015a) suggests "that beliefs are instrumental in shaping teachers' practice and that such beliefs may be relatively immune to efforts from teacher educators and policy makers to change them" (p. 37). This, of course, was what I was experiencing firsthand. In order to appreciate the potential conflict that arises from opposing teacher beliefs and expressed professional expectations, the teacher must be *awakened* to themselves and their positionality within the system of education they are working. Then, upon consciously engaging in critical reflexivity, the teacher can truly affect their sense of agency and subsequent actions within their profession. The question now, is how one "awakens" a teacher to the concept and constructs of agency in order to exercise their perceived agency in professional contexts.

Conceptualizing Agency within a Structure and Culture of Education

In the realm of education, concepts of structure and agency, particularly as they pertain to agents of change, have suffered a disheartening consternation by governing systems and policies. This, in turn, has challenged the roles and responsibilities of actors engaged in education and called for a redefining of education's purpose and assessment. The actors, who can be identified as, but are not necessarily limited to, students, parents,

teachers, administrators, and the communities being formed and served by schools, create a *correlated* structure which controls and influences education, in a universal sense: having an effect on everything and everyone involved within the learning process. Therefore, the process of educating is not, as some would argue, a closed bifurcated system populated by those who educate and those who are educated (Biesta, 2015; Freire, 1998; Lipponen and Kumpulainen, 2011). Rather, everyone involved in education does and should learn from each other, assuming that the structures in place allow for such learning. The structures, then, must secure an environment conducive to such learning in order to perpetuate the outcomes. I refer to this as *correlated* learning (learning that generates a mutual relationship or connection, in which one thing affects or depends on another). Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) make reference to this conceptually as a "socio-cultural framework of learning" in their study of agency in teacher education. I, however, hope to push the structures necessary to support and promote agency further.

Within a *correlated* structure the interdependence of each actor is experienced through a multiplicity of connections. The structure can be damaged or altered in such a way that the relationships between actors are severed or restricted. Several examples can be seen in failed school reform initiatives that segregate and compartmentalize educational actors by their perceived needs, thus isolating them and their effects on one another. This isolation serves to the detriment of correlated learning. This structural concept of correlated learning is directly related to the work of Myles Horton and the Highlander Research and Education Center. In his collected writings Horton (2003) describes Highlander as a place where people are "educated not only by the process of sharing experiences and knowledge with one another, but also by taking part in group

life" (p. 211) a concept Horton referred to as "mutual education." Although Horton's work can seem extreme and impractical for systems of public education currently in place, his philosophy of education as a lived experience which promotes problem solving and decision making rooted in a community of invested and equal citizens has been a veteran ideal which emulates a model of democratic education most notably promoted by John Dewey (1938).

What is paramount to the *success* of this structure is the *capacity* of its actors to make informed, empowered decisions which lead to their own mutual success (Lipponen and Kumpulainen, 2011). I argue, that this capacity can best be understood as agency. Success, however, should be understood in this context to represent the exercise of learning, not the achievement of a prescribed outcome. It is important to make this distinction as it pertains to the relationship of structure on agency. In other words, a structure that promotes correlated learning does not require nor does it measure specific outcomes to be successful. Rather, the structure, when successful, will promote agency: the capacity of individual actors to exercise what they have learned. Within this structure facilitating the process of learning is the only goal. This speaks against modern practices of education which focus on outcome-based assessment to establish learning through the evidence and evaluation of learning products. In a correlated structure, the process and consciousness of learning (or meta-cognition) *is* the goal, not the learning outcomes.

Rancière (1991) refers to this as the "emancipation" of the ignorant. Those who are emancipated, like those in a true structure of correlated learning, who practice agency successfully, understand what "the consciousness of [an] intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself" (p. 39).

Rancière and Horton shared this educational principal of equality and depend on it to promote their ideals of *universal* and *mutual education*. Both understood the value of experiential learning and both knew that the value of that experience was dependent on the context in which it occurred, a context that is created from the correlation between actors and the structures in which they operate. It is important to note, at this point, that correlations generate a structure that is dependent on communication between actors. More importantly, the influence of those correlations between actors and their capacity to act is crucial to our understanding of intelligence and the processes associated with correlated learning.

This process embodies the generative power of structure and agency within their dialectic interdependence, or the "praxis" of correlated learning. Rancière (1991) discusses this when he describes people as a "will served by an intelligence" (p. 51). He explains

> …where need ceases, intelligence slumbers, unless some stronger will makes itself understood and says: continue, look at what you are doing and what you can do if you apply the same intelligence, you have already made use of, by bringing to each thing the same attention, by not letting yourself stray from your path.

What Rancière is describing is the communication of actors to promote agency within a structure that is dependent on such communication and defined by its ability to successfully generate such action through the *praxis* of correlated learning. This is similar to Archer's (1995) theory of *morphogenesis*, in that structure and agency do not exist in a bifurcated system in which one holds dominance over the other. Rather, morphogenesis postulates the "understanding that people always act out of structural and cultural circumstances, which their very actions then proceed to modify or sustain"

(Porpora, 2013). Evaluating one's actions for its effects on the process of learning, and subsequently modifying one's actions to reflect such an evaluation creates a *critical consciousness*, or a *conscientization* of the individual agent, as posited by Freire (1970). With these philosophical frameworks in place, correlated learning is, in the context of educational structure and agency, both a desired outcome and ontological requirement. Furthermore, it generates a structure that promotes the importance of agency as emergent and dialectical.

"Troubling" Accountability

In tackling the dichotomous conceptions of agency, as positioned within or against structure, I was challenged to narrow my reflections, and consequently the scope of the present study, to a single educational *structure* that is complex enough to appreciate the significance of teacher agency within my own career and experiences and within a larger dialog of school reform. With this in mind, I chose to examine the structural concepts and practices of *accountability* as a performing arts educator in central Texas. This is in no way an effort to limit the scope of educational structures and their effects on teacher and learner agency. I believe accountability is one of many structural elements that are products of educational systems. I choose accountability, particularly for its position in my own story as a performing arts educator, and the paradoxical relationship it generates within discussions of structure and agency for all educators.

Accountability has been a long-standing topic of conversation and debate (Rosenshine and McGaw, 1972; Senechal, 2013; Turner, 1977), particularly in disciplines that do not fall under the "traditional courses" defined by the "core curriculum" i.e., fine arts, foreign language, CTE, et cetera (Dorman, 1973; Horsley, 2009; Labuta, 1972).

However, much is to be gained from accountability when viewed from an agential perspective as a structure (culturally, socially, and politically constructed) in which agents (students, teachers, administrators, and their communities) must act. When conceptualizing accountability as a structure within educational institutions several questions must be posed: To whom are we or they accountable? What is the measure of accountability? How do we define, establish, model, and celebrate success? How do we deal with failure and remediation? How do we make improvements? et cetera. Each of these questions plays a vital role in the innumerable initiatives, programs, agencies, supervisors and peers that are in a continuous search for what is desired, what is advertised, and what is produced as *accountability*, and ultimately what is perpetuated through the actions of agents operating within the structure of accountability in education.

Unfortunately, such questions have generally led to accountability being framed by what is *lacking*, resulting in deficit thinking on the topic of accountability in public schools, particularly for the arts (Labuta, 1972; Rosenshine and McGaw, 1972; Turner, 1977). Whether it is funding, resources, requisite knowledge, or potential performance outcomes, accountability and its measures of assessment seem to be focused on what is not present, rather than appreciating divergent and creative definitions of success that capitalize on available resources (Hursh, 2005). Although many argue that socio-political and economic characteristics of student and teacher populations satisfy such deficits and the actions being taken because of them, I would argue that the state of accountability and lack of satisfying assessment thereof, stems from a confusion of the terms and their function in achieving and identifying goals for education as a whole.

Ultimately, we have turned accountability in education into a "blame game." This notion perpetuates a neo-liberal rhetoric that taxpayers are paying for a *product* called education. While I try to avoid the plethora of business analogies that are too frequently used to illustrate issues in public education and plague our perception of the purpose and function of education: paying customers want to know what they are getting for the associated cost. With a financial commitment, the general public expects accountability, although it means something quite different to each stakeholder who seeks to enforce it and/or satisfy it. Unfortunately, in a society driven by consumerism, accountability is expressed as failed expectations and desires rather than sincere and clearly defined needs. Teri Turner in her article "Accountability: A Mosaic Image" (1977) discusses the difficulty of defining accountability through the frequently cited, "who is responsible for what, and to whom?" She suggests "The slipperiness of the concept encourages relegation of definitional problems to the status of semantic dispute, while implementation of the design moves forward" (p.235).

In the article "Issues in Assessing Teacher Accountability in Public education," published early in the national dialogue that emerged in the 1970s on accountability in public education, Rosenshine and McGaw (1972) unpack the issue further.

> It might be realistic to assume that students, teachers, administrators, parents, publishers, educators, and the general public are each accountable for some aspect of educational program. But if each group is responsible, how can we determine which part of a child's mathematics achievement, for example, is attributed to each of the parties? Any attempt to use accountability should make us painfully aware of the inadequacy of our educational knowledge. The tragedy is that we seem to move from innovation to innovation, failing to conduct, synthesize, and disseminate the research about each change (pp.642-643).

Although this article is dated, the need for clearly defined parameters of success in public education is still expressed today to facilitate meaningful assessment and ultimately improvement. Nelson and Jones (2007) speak more on the capitalist nature of education, and what has become a "big business" mentality to public education in their article "The End of 'Public' in Public Education." Their reference to the No Child Left Behind Act, exposes a failed attempt to organize and address educational needs by narrowly defining good teaching "as a set of technical skills aimed at getting students to achieve with some proficiency on standardized tests, which, of course, are designed, constructed, and published by a select few corporations that have reaped the enormous profit from these products" (p. 6).

With such a bleak outlook on what seems to be a corrupt and repudiated system of accountability, where does one start to manifest meaningful assessment in education? Leon Lessinger (1971) states "the heart of accountability is control and its face is productivity" (p.19). These are truly poignant words which come from a pivotal time in the development and establishment of accountability in the field of education. But herein lies the paradox: if, as Lessinger suggests, accountability starts with control and is represented by productivity, who has control, and more importantly, who gives it? The agency of every actor within a correlated structure of learning may be employed to answer such questions, each with unique and divergent perspectives that help perpetuate multiple conceptualizations of accountability. As discussed by Rosenshine and McGaw (1972) there are many people to associate with educational accountability, but who has the ultimate responsibility and what are they doing with it? It would seem we have come full circle and begun another round of the *blame game*. Searching to designate

responsibility for failure, students can blame teachers, teachers can blame administrators, administrators can blame government offices, government offices will blame the taxpayers, who are the parents of the students and who feed back into the cycle through the students themselves. Ultimately, true accountability is lost in a perpetual spiral of blame. How then, in the conflated significance of so-called accountability, can agency help to navigate our understanding of education and its requisite assessments?

This study *troubles* accountability as an agential structure of education with a *double(d)* lens, a methodology postulated in the seminal works of Patti Lather (1997, 2012). Furthermore, this study utilizes the Four Organizational Frames of Bolman & Deal (2017) to investigate accountability as a structure in education constituted by political, structural, symbolic, and human resource-oriented experiences. The frames offer a valuable tool to better understand the structural nature of accountability within the larger conversation of agential conceptualizations.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

It has been suggested that "teacher agency … has the capacity to make the operation of the educational system, both at the systemic level and at the individual and collective level of teacher practice, more intelligent and, therefore, more able to engage with the complexities and the uniqueness of the here and now in meaningful and purposeful ways" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 149). As articulated above, in exploring the topic of teacher agency, several important questions are posed: Where are the philosophical and pragmatic boundaries of teacher agency as we continue to examine the implications of agency on teachers' professional identities? How does one "awaken" a teacher to the concept and constructs of agency in order to exercise their perceived

agency in professional contexts? Which educational philosophies and practices generate a structure that promotes the importance of agency as an emergent and dialectical phenomenon? And how can accountability be understood and subsequently resolved as a structure of education which paradoxically affects teacher agency?

The current atmosphere of education perpetuates a tumultuous climate in which educators must construct their identity amidst competing philosophies of education, pedagogy, and schooling. Furthermore, their professional actions are seldom appreciated in context of teachers' ability to act as agents of change undermining their significance and the importance of their beliefs and sense of agency (Priestley, et al. 2015). An emergent theory of agency is suggested within a temporal construct that appreciates the phenomenological aspects of critical reflexivity. This construct invites qualitative inquiry into the subjective well-being associated with related concepts of self-constitution.

This study identifies requisite agentic variables and helps to reconceptualize teacher agency within multiple fields and disciplines in order to establish an emergent phenomenological concept of agency generated by intrapersonal beliefs that can be used within the context of authoring authentic selves as teachers in professional contexts (chapter 2). The study will serve as an example of an agentic conversation, practiced through reflexivity, and realized autoethnographically, between myself as both student and teacher within educational structures of accountability (chapters 4-6). Ultimately, I promote other educators to practice similar reflexive/autoethnographic conversations between themselves and their unique professional and educational contexts. The process of "awakening" educators to their agentic realities through autoethnographic reflexivity holds perceivably limitless potential for teacher education, professional and personal

development, and the broader concepts of school reform (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, and Paloniemi, 2013; Hadar and Benish-Weisman, 2019; Lipponen and Kumpulainen, 201; Priestley, Biesta, Robinson, 2015a).

Research Questions

1. What are the requisite components, variables, and mechanisms of agency?
    a. How are these elements effected by agentic beliefs?
    b. How do agentic beliefs effect professional teacher agency?
    c. What is the relationship between agency and structure within the paradigms of education and teaching?
2. How is accountability understood as a structural element in education?
    a. How does accountability as structure effect teacher professional agency?
3. What are the benefits of employing critically reflexive practices in teaching to promote agentic beliefs?

Definitions

The study depends on a number of terms that span a wide range of disciplines. Several terms are shared between specific disciplines and their meaning is altered in various contexts. The definitions provided below are offered as operational definitions to the current multi-disciplinary study. When appropriate, reference is made to specific disciplines to challenge generalizations of terms and contextualize their meaning to the current study.

Agency: The temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both

reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Sense of Agency: The "sense of agency" is a central aspect of human self-consciousness and refers to the experience of oneself as the agent of one's own actions (David et al., 2008) or the ability to refer to oneself as the author of one's own actions (De Vignemont & Fourneret, 2004). Although this term is directly correlated to psycho-cognitive research, it should be understood in this study as defined by Emirbayer and Mische (1998).

Ecological approach: A theory of agency that suggests that the achievement of agency should be understood as a configuration of influences from the past, orientations toward the future and engagement with the present (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Morphogenesis: The term morphogenesis refers to change (-genesis) in the shape of things (morpho-), a change in agency, or culture or structure. The morphogenetic cycle is an analytical framework which follows the course of time (Case, 2015). This structure of change will be applied to the ecological approach to agency in context to broader conversations of agency.

Critical Realism: A philosophical approach associated with Roy Bhaskar (1944-2014), which combines a general philosophy of science (transcendental realism) with a philosophy of social science (critical naturalism) to describe an interface between the natural and social worlds.

Framing: Bolman and Deal (2017), following the work of Goffman, Dewey and others, utilize the word *frame* to deliberately mix metaphors and "enhance the concept as a window, map, tool, lens, orientation, prism, and perspective" (p.10). They define a frame

as a “mental model – a set of ideas and assumptions – that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular territory” (p.10). This study uses their concept and design for framing to more easily navigate the dense nature of agential structures within education, specifically *accountability*.

Summary

Despite a wealth of literature on the concept of agency, there has been relatively little research done to substantiate its significance in forming professional identities for teachers, and the impact that such has on education (Hadar and Benish-Weisman, 2019). This study pursues a method to both appreciate agency as an ontologically and epistemologically powerful tool, and to mechanize it in efforts of engagement and improvement of professional teacher identities and subsequently educational experiences as a whole. This study employs the work of critical realists, who have satisfied both ontic and epistemic concerns pertaining to a theory of agency and the disposition to express it methodologically within the paradigm of Critical Realism (Archer, 2000, 2003). A tapestry of disciplines, conceptualizations, and applications of agency and related terms are woven together to further promote the complexity and significance of agentic conversations amongst teachers and educational structures such as accountability.

In order to fully appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of agency and its effects on teachers, an intentionally dynamic understanding of agency is constructed from the work of philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists to challenge competing constructs and promote an emergent phenomenological sense of agency realized through the process of critical reflexivity and development of agentic beliefs. Focused on identifying and promoting intrapersonal agentic beliefs through autoethnographic inquiry, this study

develops a method of practicing agency through reflexivity that will encourage agential conversations with teachers' past, present, and future selves within their unique educational structures and contexts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

> "The term 'agency' is quite slippery and is used differently depending on the epistemological roots and goals of scholars who employ it."
>
> —Hitlin & Elder

Disambiguation of Agency: In Search of Meaning

Agency has come to be a powerful yet loaded term with a wealth of meanings in various contexts. Dependent on the discipline through which you employ the term, agency can shift in function and importance when discussing the role of actors and their actions. Sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists have all contributed to a large canon of work pertaining to agency and have established multiple theories and frameworks in which agency is perceived, understood, and employed. All of these theories and perspectives on agency add countless terms to the lexicon associated with agency and its related concepts. These terms are used interchangeably in and across disciplines and have generated confusion on what exactly agency means and ultimately how it should be used to describe actors and their actions. We will examine four such terms in an effort to disambiguate the concept of agency and posit it as an *emergent phenomenon, temporally bound,* constructed from *intrapersonal beliefs*.

First, we examine the notion of *self-efficacy*, to distinguish agency from its theorized components and position it within related fields of study. Second, we examine *autonomy* from psychological, philosophical and sociological perspectives in order to establish distinctions of individuality versus social independence. Subsequently, we explore *Socio-Cognitive Theory* and *Self-Determination Theory*, most notably correlated to the concept of agency by psychologists Albert Bandura, Richard Ryan, and Edward

Deci, to appreciate the psychological importance of agency and the unique perspective it offers the canon of work associated with human agency, identity, and personality.

Upon reviewing these related topics, a unique interdisciplinary perspective of agency is established to support the phenomenological nature of agency as a temporal dialectic construct theorized empirically by Biesta & Tedder (2006) as the *ecological approach*. The ecological approach draws on the work of Emirbayer and Mische's (1996) *chordal triad* (which I elaborate on from a musical perspective) and Archer's (1995) *morphogenesis* (which both utilizes a temporal construct and supports the analytical dualism of agency and structure).

The ecological approach is then positioned amidst conversations of teacher professional agency employed by researchers Mark Priestley, Gert Biesta and Sarah Robinson (2014, 2015). Their extraordinary work on teacher agency and the ecological approach is different than what is suggested in the present study in its use of an ethnographic (as opposed to autoethnographic) lens. Teacher beliefs, in the context of published work on teacher agency, are discussed to clarify the significance of intrapersonal (reflexive) dialog as the generative mechanism of agency. Priestley et al. (2015), however, will aide in conceptualizing the function of agency in teachers' professional lives and the need for agential dialog within the profession.

Self-Efficacy

Of all the terms associated with agency, *self-efficacy*, as theorized by Albert Bandura (1982), presents the strongest connection to the emergent phenomenological concept of human agency employed in this study. Bandura defines perceived self-efficacy as an individual's "beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of

performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (1994, p. 71). Self-efficacy promotes an individual's beliefs over other agentic factors as paramount to their judgements and actions. This is a crucial concept in the process of developing an intrapersonal understanding of agency that is primarily affected by one's beliefs as opposed to agency that is affected by external environmental or social structures.

Furthermore, the cyclical process inherent in Bandura's (1994) conception of perceived efficacy magnifies the significance of one's beliefs in the phenomenological construction of agency. That is, as one develops and recognizes one's beliefs within a given situation that requires action, those beliefs will impact when and how actions are taken, through reflexivity, those actions then shape new beliefs on the capability of the actor to act, which ultimately affects the overall structure of the environment in which the actor is acting and the beliefs that constructed it, which in turn affects further actions within the continued cycle. This cycle is similar to Archer's concept of morphogenesis that will be discussed in detail later. Bandura (1994), however, highlights the psychological significance of this cycle in context to the four psychological processes through which self-beliefs of efficacy affect human functioning.

He explains that "personal goal setting is influenced by self-appraisal of capabilities" (p. 72). In learning predictive and regulative rules, for example, Bandura (1994) suggests that "people must draw on their knowledge to construct options, to weight and integrate predictive factors, to test and revise their judgements against the immediate and distal results of their actions, and to remember which factors they had tested and how well they had worked" (p. 72). Bandura (1994) clarifies, however, that the

"intensity of emotional and physical reactions" is not as important as how such reactions are "perceived and interpreted" (p. 72).

In other words, the reflexive evaluation of one's actions in order to construct schema that will inform future actions is not significant because of the magnitude of one's assessment, but rather because of the beliefs that such an assessment generates. Bandura (1994) suggests that "people who have a high sense of efficacy are likely to view their state of affective arousal as an energizing facilitator of performance, whereas those who are beset by self-doubts regard their arousal as a debilitator" (p. 72). This construction of beliefs from the evaluation of lived experience reflects the intrapersonal nature of human agency realized in the mechanism of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982).

Bandura elaborates this point by clarifying that "… acting on misjudgments of personal efficacy can produce adverse consequences, accurate appraisal of one's own capabilities has considerable functional value. Self-efficacy judgements, whether accurate or faulty, influence choice of activities and environmental settings" (Bandura, 1982, p. 123). Here the correlation of intrapersonal beliefs and environmental settings, or in broader terms, agency and structure, are readily apparent. What one believes of their capabilities, regardless of the actual ability of achievement, has a direct impact on their actions and ultimately the environment within which they are acting.

This has profound implications for how actors engage, regardless of how conscious they are of their engagement, in the process of decision making and the power it wields to shaping the environment in which they act. Drawing connections to the present study, I ask the question, how can consciousness of the agentic process, particularly as it pertains to teachers, improve both the professional environment in which

teachers act and the actions they take within that environment? Before this question is addressed directly, further exploration into the varied conceptions and requisite components of agency is needed to solidify it as a truly interdisciplinary concept which inherently promotes its phenomenological nature.

Autonomy

Autonomy is arguably the term most often confused with agency. Psychologists define the term as "the state of independence and self- determination in an individual, a group, or a society" (Nugent, 2013). Although concise, this definition lacks context and fails to elaborate on the complexity of individual actions within various social and political structures. There is, therefore, a need to define autonomy through the fields of philosophy and sociology to fully appreciate its role in developing a richer understanding of agency.

In moral and political philosophy individual autonomy "is an idea that is generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one's own person, to live one's life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one's own and not the product of manipulative or distorting external forces" (Christman, 2008, para.1). This relates directly to the psychological notions of *independence* and *self-determination* but elaborates the role of actors to be truly autonomous individuals. In context of understanding human agency, this is on the surface a radical notion: to essentially abandon the influence of the environment in which one takes action, or as Christman (2008) puts it the "manipulative or distorting forces" that surround us. The notion of autonomy creates a distinction between the *individual* and the *community* or *autonomous* versus *heteronomous* action. However, autonomy also suggests that no actor can perform independent of the

situatedness of an environment and the interconnectedness of other actors and structures inherent to the agentic process. Although this may seem contradictory at first, particularly to the cited definitions that advocate for autonomy as an "independence" from external social forces, such definitions simultaneously recognize the presence of social structures and their influence on action, and position autonomy as a *perceived* independence of those social structures, harkening back to the power and significance of intrapersonal beliefs referenced previously. In other words, by claiming that autonomy is the capacity to be one's own person by taking ownership over one's actions rather than claiming the effect of external forces, we are recognizing the existence of external forces, but promoting an intrapersonal understanding of one's actions over environmental influences.

This is further developed in contemporary literature which refutes the binary conceptualization of autonomy, having either individual independence, or perceived independence within the context of a whole (Parker, 2015). As stated by Allwright (1990) "…autonomy is the optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-dependence and human inter-dependence, emphasizing the important difference between autonomy and total independence." This distinction positions autonomy as one of the vital components of agency and reflexive beliefs, further promoting a dialectic of structure and agency. That is, autonomy, in recognizing the significance of independence from social and cultural structures that influence one's actions (autonomous action), simultaneously recognizes the effects social and cultural structures have on agency regardless of perceived independence (heteronomous action).

Although autonomy references one's "capacity to be one's own person" theoretically removed from social and cultural influences, it does not necessarily incite

action. Believing that you are autonomous, does not mean that you will act autonomously. Furthermore, one may act in recognition of their own agency with or without a since of autonomy. Kompa (2016) addresses this head on:

> We can act for ourselves as individuals pursuing personal interests, but we can equally act by taking the interest of others wholeheartedly into consideration without compromising personal integrity. Depending on one's cultural perspective, somebody's individual freedom might be perceived as somebody else's selfishness. Identifying autonomy narrowly with individual independence can to this extent not pass a culturally unbiased perspective… Individual as well as collective agency are… constructed neither unipolar autonomous or heteronomous, but they co-exist as a system of mutual checks and balances (p. 3).

The key to understanding autonomy and agency are in the actors' actions. One's autonomy may or may not be affected by their social and cultural environment, but their actions as an agent within those social and cultural structures are informed by their perceived autonomy. This is the greatest distinction to be made between agency and autonomy. Consequently, this perspective of autonomy aides in our understanding of agency as an intrapersonal belief, in that, the *influence* one may or may not experience in taking action should not be separated by the conscious act. One may experience autonomy as a perception of freedom, to act as a *willful agent*. Maxine Greene describes autonomy in her *Dialectic of Freedom* (1988) as such:

> To be autonomous is to be self-directed and responsible; it is to be capable of acting in accord with internalized norms and principles; it is to be insightful enough to know and understand one's impulses, ones' motives, and the influences of one's past. There are those who ascribe to the autonomous person a free rational will, capable of making rational sense of an extended objective world. Values like independence, self-sufficiency, and authenticity are associated with autonomy, because the truly autonomous person is not supposed to be susceptible to outside manipulations and compulsions. Indeed, [they] can, by maintaining a calm and rational stance, transcend compulsions and complexes that might otherwise interfere with judgement and clarity (p. 118).

But this does not remove the actor from social and cultural context. The decision to act is deeply rooted in latent and overt constructs of social and cultural identity, motivation, consequence, and value. What is most important is the actor's *beliefs* about their autonomy (among other related factors) as the generative element of agency. Autonomy, as a component of agency, loses its effect if the agent does not believe it exists.

The assurance that social and cultural structures secure autonomous environments does not guarantee that actors will take action as autonomous beings. If they refuse, consciously or unconsciously, to take action because of internalized beliefs of autonomy, whether they are true of false, the impact of autonomy is lost. One must depend on the temporality of experience to construct an internal narrative that recognizes and substantiates autonomy for the individual to take action autonomously. This alludes again to the emergent qualities of agency that will be discussed in greater detail within Archer's theory of morphogenesis (1995).

We are now positioned to realize the dialectic nature inherent in the concept of autonomy, between *self* and *other*, to establish one's *sense of agency*. To that end, a new set of terms taken from the field of psychology, *Socio-Cognitive Theory* and *Self-Determination Theory*, must be employed to further understand this dialectic and the interdependence of both structure and agency in the constitution of self.

Socio-Cognitive Theory Versus Self-Determination Theory

Socio-Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) both reside in the realm of social psychology and speak to the emergence of agency and the importance of efficacy and autonomy within the context of social structures. The most

significant distinction in the juxtaposition of these two theories, however, is the role of the individual actor when engaged with their social environments.

Put precisely, SCT is a "theory of psychological functioning that emphasizes learning from the social environment… [It] postulates reciprocal interactions among personal, behavioral, and social/environmental factors. Persons use various vicarious, symbolic, and self-regulatory processes as they strive to develop a *sense of agency* in their lives" (Schunk & Usher, 2012). The "sense of agency" referenced here is vital to the intrapersonal nature of agency the present study utilizes. The key factor of SCT is the importance of social environments in the constitution of self. This is not to say, however, that SCT accepts the duality of agency and social structures.

Bandura (1986, 1989, 2006) speaks directly to this misconception and clarifies agency as both emergent and interactive within social environments (1986). Furthermore, Bandura refutes conceptualizations of agency that are purely autonomous or mechanical (1989). He states: "Persons are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of animating environmental influences. Rather, they make causal contribution to their own motivation and action within a system of *triadic reciprocal causation*" (p.1175). In this model of reciprocal causation Bandura (1989) suggests that action, cognition, affectation, as well as other personal factors, and environmental events function interactively and determinatively to generate self-regulated constructs of agency.

The engagement of actors with their environments and the subsequent cognitive and psychological functions necessary to facilitate agentic processes is inherent in Bandura's conceptualization of SCT and echoes the work of scholars across multiple

disciplines. The difference then, between SCT and other theories, is the importance of the *dialectic* nature of agency and social structures to generate one's sense of self.

The self, Bandura says, "is the person… Selfhood embodies one's physical and psychological makeup, with a personal identity and agentic capabilities operating in concert" (1989, p. 170). The construction and defining of *oneself* is mechanized by agentic factors, none of which is "more central or pervasive than belief of personal efficacy" (Bandura, 1997, p.170). Efficacy plays a crucial role in Bandura's work as it posits motivation and desires of the individual as essential factors to their sense of agency. SCT emphasizes the importance of social structures and environments in how human beings learn and ultimately take action that will shape and determine their personalities. It stresses the innate value of social engagement in the process of developing one's identity efficaciously.

In contrast, SDT promotes the importance of autonomy and the constitution of persons who naturally possess *endogenous* tendencies "toward gaining integrity and enhancing their human potentials" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.5). Deci & Ryan suggest that the field of psychology

> is quite widely divided on the issues of inherent tendencies toward psychological growth, a unified self, and autonomous, responsible behavior. Whereas some theorists see our nature as including a self-organizing, growth promoting tendency, others see us as wholly lacking such an endowment, and this as mere conditioned or reactive reflections of our surroundings (2002, p.4).

It is important to note, however, similar to SCT, SDT does not support a duality of agency and structure. Rather, it endorses an *organismic dialectical* model that focuses on the "interaction between an active, integrating human nature and social context that either nurture or impede the organism's active nature" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.6).

The distinction, although discrete, is the actor's capacity to generate agency interdependently of the social structures in which they are acting. SDT advocates for a *humanistic* self-determined model of motivation and personality with an emphasis on the autonomous factors of agency. SCT endorses the individuals' engagement with their environment and the significance of self-efficacy in how one takes action in establishing their own sense of agency.

The challenge of balancing the significance of the individual in context of the structural in the constitution of the self is omnipresent in the discourse of agential theory and research. Although neither of these social psychological theories deal directly with the concept of agency, it does promote the categorization of factors that ultimately attribute to agentic phenomena. Additionally, Bandura, Ryan, and Deci have all referenced and written on agency in the broader perspective of their work. The perspective they offer is important, in that, it expands the fields in which agency is seen and ultimately appreciated. In addition to the wealth of scholarly work that has been done in philosophy and sociology, SCT and SDT employ the psychological aspects of human agency which further support it as an emergent dialectic phenomenon.

A Temporal Understanding of Agency

Throughout this disambiguation of the term agency, time has presented itself as a recurring theme and latent concept crucial to the generative power of agency to author *self* (Hitlin & Elder, 2007). Although subtle, all of the terms employed thus far, in the context of understanding agency, have referenced the significance of actors taking action within social and cultural structures which in turn elicits temporal boundaries from which those actions take place. As articulated by Hitlin and Elder (2007) "Temporal orientations

are a fundamental aspect of social interaction, and form the basis for developing an understanding of human agency that bridges multiple uses of the concept and links to an established literature on the self" (p. 171).

One can logically argue, when an agent takes action, they are immediately positioned within three distinct aspects of time: the past (from which their considerations to act are formed), the future (in which they have postulated the outcome of their actions), and the present (in which they take action) (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Hitlin & Elder, 2008). This is a radical oversimplification of the temporal variables of agency. I do not promote, nor am I suggesting, a reductionist approach to the concept. Rather, the significance of time and the simplicity of the triune model above i.e., past, future, and present, are the very foundation upon which a generative model of agency is constructed (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Although postulated from a variety of perspectives, within a number of fields, employing a myriad of terms and jargon (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Hitlin & Elder, 2007; Williams & Gilovich, 2008; Archer, 2010; Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015; Parker, 2016) the temporality of agency is vital to establishing a dialectic relationship between the constructs of agency and structure. Furthermore, the designation of agency as being temporally bound allows for a codification of agentic variables which invite and promote empirical inquiry of causal mechanisms (Archer, 2010). The significance of this shift in agentic research cannot be understated. Elaborating on the argument for the temporality of agency articulated above, Hitlin & Elder (2007) offer a concise yet potent description to further its importance:

> Actor's temporal orientations are shaped by situational exigencies, with some situations calling for tensive focus on the present and others requiring an extended temporal orientation. Agentic behavior is influenced by the requirements of the interaction; as actors become more or less concerned with the immediate moment

> versus long-term life goals, they employ different social psychological processes and exhibit different forms of agency" (p. 171).

Hitlin and Elder (2007) postulate four variants (or forms) of agency through an actor's intrapersonal perceptions or *time horizon*. Although their work offers great insight into the empirical research of agency, I would argue that it anatomizes the concept of agency to the extent that the proposed variants can distract from the actual experience of actors exercising agency and subsequently constructing their sense of agency through action. That is, the theoretical value of dissecting agency into requisite components only benefits the exercise of theorizing the concept of agency, rather than illuminating the experience of agency for the actor. It is impractical to assume that an actor, exercising their perceived sense of agency, understands their actions through a fractured lens, let alone has the power to isolate said actions into independent variants. What we experience as agency is beautifully tangled up in the forms suggested by Hitlin and Elder (2007) as well as other socio-psychological and temporal distinctions. What I believe is most important within this theorized web of agency is what is referred to as one's *sense of agency*, or the perceptions and *beliefs* of actors to successfully act within particular environments (Marcel, 2003).

This is, for some, the operant definition of agency (Gallagher, 2012, David, Newen, & Vogeley, 2008, De Vignemont & Fourneret, 2004) particularly amongst neuroscientists. The "sense of agency" referenced and promoted in the present study is more closely associated with the philosophical, psychological, and sociological conceptions of agency as one's *consciousness* of their actions, which support one's *beliefs* about their capacity to act. Gallagher (2012) comments on the difficulty of defining one's "sense of agency," as it is utilized across a number of different fields by a

growing number of researchers, for painfully specific ends. The challenge, previously stated at the beginning of this chapter, to adequately define agency (or in this case a "sense of agency") in a way that can truly satisfy the numerous disciplines that employ it, is well represented by Gallagher's work. Further exploration of a "sense of agency" understood neurologically is not necessary for this study. The intentional reference to Gallagher's (2012) work is made only to further express the remarkable complexity of agency and its related terms as multidisciplinary concepts and link such research to its requisite temporality. Further discussion of one's *sense of agency* as agentic *beliefs*, particularly as it pertains to teachers' professional identities, will be explored later. What must be well established here, is the paramount need to understand agency in context to its temporal variables (Williams & Gilovich, 2008, Hitlin & Elder, 2007, Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, Markus & Nurius 1986).

In their seminal work on agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) began by recognizing the elusiveness and vagueness of the term agency as it has been associated with so many other concepts such as "selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity" (p.962). An early reference to the temporality of "self" is discussed in Markus and Nurius' (1986) research on *possible selves*, which they suggest "derive from representations of the self in the past and… include representation of the self in the future… [yet] are different and separate from the current or now selves [and still] intimately connected to them" (p. 954). Hitlin and Elder (2007) speak directly to the importance of time, self, and what they refer to as the curiously abstract concept of agency by explaining that "temporal orientations are a fundamental aspect of social interaction, and form the basis for developing an

understanding of the human agency that bridges multiple uses of the concept and links to an established literature on the self" (p.171). Williams and Golvich (2008) elaborate in their conceptions of the self and others across time by recognizing that "who we are is not just who we are right now, or what we were like in the past, but who we are striving to be" (p.1037). In context to the scholarship above, a great deal of attention has been placed on the future self and the significance of recognizing agency as a pursuit to emergent goals. This, of course, falls short in appreciating the interdependence of all three variants in time to inform agency. As stated by Williams & Gilovich, "Because people's lives are passages through time, there are three ways in which they can be described: as the person they have been, the person they are, and the person they may be" (2008, p.1039).

Emirbayer and Mische (1996) have addressed the importance of time in conceptualizing agency, and established a rich and definitive historicity of agency across multiple disciplines i.e., sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Their most significant contribution is establishing what they call the *chordal triad of agency* which posits the analytical separation of agency into three distinct yet interconnected dimensions. They use this triadic model to define agency as:

> The temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments - the temporal-relational contexts of action - which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations (1996, p.970).

Beyond the obvious benefits of generating a definition of agency that honors multiple perspectives and fields of study, "the analytical separation of different components affecting the achievement of agency allows the impact of each to be

explored, whilst acknowledging that neat separation is not always possible empirically" (Parker, 2016, p.6).

It is important to note that the empirical implications within Emirbayer and Mische's (1996) definition of agency do not suggest positivistic opportunities to understand agency quantifiably. Many researchers have attempted to utilize analytical conceptualizations of agency to develop quantitative measurements of agency and its related variants and variables (Cauce & Gordon, 2018, Kristiansen, 2014, Alkire, 2008, 2005, Hitlin & Elder, 2006), but have fallen short to fully appreciate the complexity of agency and its requisite components as theorized across disciplines. Hitlin and Elder (2007) note that "a sense of agency embedded within time is important in many theoretical treatments of the concept, but this is rarely operationalized" (p.42). Although there has been an obvious desire to quantify empirical models of agency, particularly over the past 20 years, researchers have recognized the failure of most models to adequately address the inherent relationships and effects of structure on agency (Cauce and Gordon, 2012) reducing such to environmental effects on agents' capacity to act. Conversely, researchers have begun to assert the significance of agentic action to create, sustain, and change structure or environments (Archer 1995, 2003, Porpora 2013) further departing from the antiquated view that agency and structure are diametrically opposed.

The present study was originally conceptualized to establish a quantitative measurement of agency utilizing reflexive questions that addressed the three temporal dimensions of agency suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1996). I recognized the deception of such a feat when trying to adequately represent agency as an *intrapersonal* phenomenon. Measuring the multitude of variables associated with the concept of agency

can speculate causation, but will inevitably fail to explain or justify actions by actors in given environments for the sheer fact that there are too many social, cultural, political, and physical variables to factor into a metric of agency that cannot simply be reduced to structural elements that encourage a polarized model of agency and structure (Archer 1995, 2003, 2010, Biesta & Tedder, 2006). In support of a phenomenological conception of agency that appreciates the generative power of the dialectic relationship between agency and structure, Biesta and Tedder (2006) build off of the temporal dimensions elaborated by Emirbayer and Mische and suggest what they call an *ecological approach* to agency.

The Ecological Approach

Ecology is the branch of biology that deals with the relations and interactions of organisms with their environments, including other organisms (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Biesta and Tedder (2006) use the term *ecology* to appreciate agency as being "strongly connected to 'context' and… to [not] be understood as a capacity or possession of the individual, but as something that is achieved in particular (transactional) situations" (p.27). This distinction is paramount to appreciating the aforementioned conflations of related terms i.e., autonomy, self-efficacy, SCT, and SDT explored at the beginning of this chapter. Additionally, the ecological approach promotes a *centrist view of agency* that recognizes the *autonomous* aspects of actors to act independent of structural influence without completely neglecting the effects of environmental circumstance, while balancing *determinism* which supports the dominance of structural factors in actors' abilities to act without neglecting the significance of agents to construct the environments in which they operate (Archer 2010, Biesta & Tedder, 2012, Parker 2016). The centrist

view of agency is not unique to the ecological approach promoted by Biesta and Tedder (2012). What distinguishes their approach is the combination of Emirbayer and Mische's (1996) analytical separation of the temporal dimensions of agency with the centrist view supported by similar scholars.

Figure 1 offers a visual representation of the ecological approach employed by Priestley et al. (2015) in their work exploring teachers' professional agency, and which is subsequently used in the present study. The importance of this model is the interconnectedness of each temporal dimension (iterational, practical-evaluative, and projective) to recognize agency as achievement (Priestley et al., 2015) originally postulated in the triadic temporal framework by Emirbayer and Mische (1996).

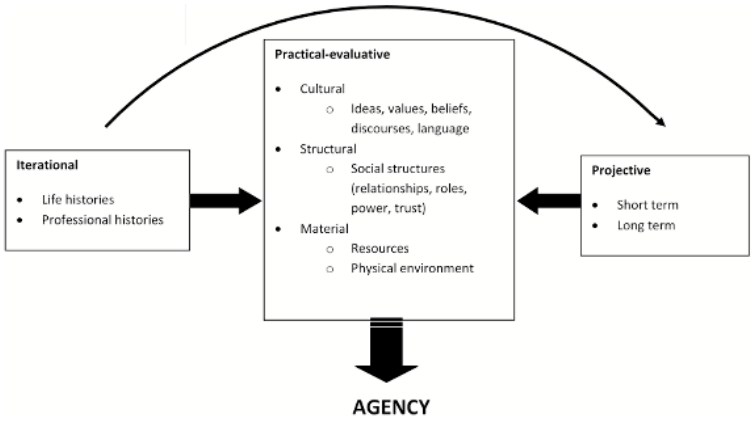

Figure 1. The ecological approach

The model also illustrates the ways [in which Priestly et al.] analytically separate out key elements of each dimension to represent teacher agency, which can then be explored empirically. Within the iterational dimension, Priestly et al. (2015) highlight the distinction between teachers' personal life histories and their professional histories, which work together to inform their past experiences and shape their present

understanding. Within the practical-evaluative dimension the cultural, structural, and material aspects of teachers' present professional understandings are articulated with clarifying concepts that highlight the positioned significance of each. Lastly, Priestley et al. identify the short-term and long-term projections of teachers projected futures.

It is important to note that the *cultural variables* reflect ways in which teachers participate within *social structures*. This is a distinction Archer (1995) articulates within the concept of morphogenesis. Socialization reflects practices and expectations upheld by large groups of people, whereas cultural practices and expectations are upheld by smaller groups or individuals within social structures. For example, the practice of eating dinner in the evening could be understood as a social norm across the world, as most people uphold this practice through their actions. What and how people eat for dinner, however, is a cultural practice that is only understood within smaller populations. In context to teacher agency, one may recognize the social structures inherent in school administrative systems, but recognize that every city, school district, and campus will generate and perpetuate unique cultural practices and experiences within such a social construct.

What Priestley et al. (2015a) offer is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather reflect specific components and key elements that effect agency within each temporal dimension when specifically considering teachers' professional agency. As you transition to new professional or personal roles of each actor, the variables within each temporal dimension would be appropriately affected and, in some cases, changed. What proves to be the most significant argument made by Priestley et al. (2015a) is that agency should be understood as an achievement as opposed to capacity. Agency as achievement is the "outcome of the interplay of iterational, practical-evaluative and projective

dimensions and […] within these dimensions further potentially relevant aspects can be distinguished" (2015a, p. 34)

To better appreciate the importance of the ecological approach to the present study we must first address the three dimensions of agency originally suggested by Emirbayer and Mische which act as a framework for the empirical inquiry of agency. Then we will address the influence of Margaret Archer's (2010) morphogenetic cycle, which connects the temporal and dialectical concepts of agency, to better understand the transformative power of agents and their agency within socio-cultural (structural) context.

Iterational. Emirbayer and Mische (1996) describe the *iterational* dimension of agency as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time" (p.971). Turning back to the musical analogy previously discussed, Emirbayer and Mische (1996) argue that agency in "root position" exists when the conscious reflection of *iterative* or past experiences is the most "resonate tone" (p. 975). This is of crucial significance when we are constructing the concept of agency within the three temporal dimensions. Our past experiences, as asserted by Emirbayer and Mische (1996), profoundly affect both the projective and practical-evaluative dimensions which are "grounded in habitual, unreflected, and mostly unproblematic patterns of action by means of which we orient our efforts in the greater part of our daily lives" (p. 975). Building on the rich scholarship of agency established in sociology and philosophy, Emirbayer sand Mische contend that the emergent phenomenological power of agency is rooted in

reflexivity. The structures that we navigate while exercising agency have been created from past actions that uphold such structures. This alludes to the *double(d) science* of Patti Lather's work (2012) which will be explored in the next chapter. In short, as one takes action within a given social or cultural environment, the space in which you act has been constructed and maintained by previous engagement. This is not to suggest that such a relationship with the past is inherently bad. The world that we live in can only be established and understood through accepted norms that have survived cultural maturation. What is significant, and the reason for bringing in Lather's work, is that in order to change one's sense of agency, one must evaluate the past, iterational dimension, in order to establish a reality in which one will act and ultimately have the power to change that reality. In other words, we cannot fully appreciate change, without knowing what it is we are changing; therefore, we must reflect on and critique the habits and traditions we uphold to fully understand the present, or practical evaluative dimension.

Practical-Evaluative. The *practical-evaluative* dimension entails "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1996, p.971). This dimension is what Emirbayer and Mische contest represents our present. Their theory is both dynamic and permanent, in that our temporal understanding of the present is comprised of unchangeable structural factors that we must recognize and engage with as we exercise our agency, as well as opportunities, that can prove to be generative and responsive to our actions. That is, in the process of evaluating one's options before acting, one establishes environmental and structural elements which affect our sense of *efficacy*, yet, we are not

always constrained by such elements, as we may recognize them as opportunities for change *through* our actions. Emirbayer and Mische contest "by increasing their capacity for practical evaluation, actors strengthen their ability to exercise agency in a *mediating* fashion, enabling them (at least potentially) to pursue their projects in ways that any challenge and transform the situational contexts of action themselves, although, given the contingency and uncertainty of interactions, the consequences of their actions cannot be controlled and will often "feedback" in ways that necessitate new agentic interventions" (1996, p. 994). In this case, one may view the practical-evaluative dimension as a cycle, in which the established environment, constructed from evaluative reflection, informs decision making and action which can be understand as practical. It is important to pause and clarify that my presentation of these dimensions follows a linear temporal construct (i.e., past, present, future), whereas Emirbayer and Mische, suggest a deliberative sequence of past, future, and present, where one's past habits, are used to construct an imagined future aspiration or goal which then is factored into the present practical-evaluation of the actions one may take. This sequence, for all intents and purposes, is the ecological approach presented by Biesta and Tedder (2012). Furthermore, I will include this exploration of Emirbayer and Mische's temporal dimensions of agency with the projective dimension, to offer an appropriate comparison to the linear model of *morphogenesis* by Margaret Archer (2010).

Projective. The last dimension of the so called "chordal triad" theorized by Emirbayer and Mische (1996) is the projective or future dimension. "Projectivity" as articulated by Emirbayer and Mische "encompasses the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action

may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future" (1996, p. 971). In terms of one's ability to function as a "change agent," which is arguably a desired role, particularly within the context of education (Priestly et al., 2015) the projective dimension holds the greatest significance. Emirbayer and Mische elaborate by describing the "locus of agency" within the realm of imagined possibilities as the "*hypothesization* of experience, as actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations they confront in their lives" (1996, p.984). They continue:

> Immersed in a temporal flow, [actors] move 'beyond themselves' into the future and construct changing images where they think they are going, where they want to go, and how they can get there from where they are at present… Projectivity is thus located in a critical mediating juncture [as referenced earlier] *between* the iterational and practical-evaluative aspects of agency" (emphasis added) (p.984).

The projective dimension holds particular interest to me as an art educator. The arts provide both aesthetic experience and opportunity to exercise and strengthen the imagination which allows individuals nestled in restrictive social and cultural environments to see beyond their present circumstances and ultimately take action to change their realities in pursuit of their imagined futures. Maxine Greene speaks to this conceptually in her *Dialectic of Freedom* (1988) when quoting J. J. Scharr (1979, p.443):

> Human beings, unlike the cattle, must choose what they will do and be. We are not governed by our instincts or totally dominated by our keepers. Rather, we are free, and our freedom puts us under an imperative of decision and action. And each action is in time. It is taken on the knife-edge of the present, and thus both completes a life to that point and projects it into the future (p. 46).

Furthermore, the need for reflexive intrapersonal dialog is promoted within the projective dimension in order to facilitate change through one's actions. To clarify, change can and is experienced regardless of one's actions, as we are intricately connected

within a dynamic social web that is consistently evolving and reacting to the actions of its constituents. If, however, one hopes to realize their agentic potential within the context of the ecological approach to agency, they must be able to envision change in context to their past and present situation in order to establish goals that will be later evaluated within the practical-evaluative dimension and transition ultimately to the iterative dimension, thus completing the agentic cycle. Subsequently, what has been loosely outlined above, is what Archer refers to as morphogenesis.

Morphogenesis

Similar to the *ecological* approach, the term and concept of *morphogenesis* is borrowed by sociologists from the field of biology to explain the "change in form" of agency and socio-cultural structures over time (Porpora, 2013). Archer's work in substantiating the concept of morphogenesis (1982, 1995, 2007) is vital to recognizing the significance of time on both agency and structure, and the phenomenological nature of their emergent dialectical connection. This is not to suggest, however, that morphogenesis can explain the nuances of particular agentic scenarios. Rather, as argued by Porpora (2013), morphogenesis should be understood as a *meta-theoretical principle*

> the morphogenetic approach does not explain anything particular. It resides rather at the level of underlying philosophy or fundamental ontology. The morphogenetic approach identifies the ingredients of any explanation of social change, namely structure, culture, and agency, and the generic form of their interrelation. Any particular social change will need to be explained by the particular structures, by the particular cultures, and by the particular agents involved (p.26).

Porpora's clarifying statement on the use and application of morphogenesis as a meta-theoretical principle is directly correlated to the scholarship associated with teacher agency, the present study included. That is, in order to appreciate the change that is

generated by the dialectical interactions of structure and agency over time, one must explore it at the micro-level, where agents are engaged with social and cultural structures within the morphogenetic cycle. Hence, the present study positions the conversation of teacher agency within the context of accountability as a social structure realized by teachers' professional cultures. Furthermore, the use of autoethnography supports the need for reflexivity within the context of understanding human agency (Archer, 2003, 2007, 2012). The details of the present study's methodological approach will be discussed in a later chapter, but it is important to mention here, the significance of morphogenesis to any contemporary exploration of agency and structure, and the subsequent requirements or expectations inherent in such exploration when utilizing concepts and theories related to morphogenesis, such as the ecological approach (Priestley, et al., 2011, Parker, 2016).

The morphogenetic approach specifically addresses the necessity of *analytical dualism* (Archer 1995). Analytical dualism combats notions of determinism, like Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, which unnecessarily reduces agency to a product of structural variables (Porpora, 2013). Archer refers to this as "central-conflation," where structure and agency are seen to be co-constitutive (Archer, 1995). This is not, however, to suggest a pure autonomy of agency within structural context. Archer's work builds off of Gidden's *structuration theory* which supports the analytical distinction of agency and structure (Porpora, 2013) without neglecting the generative effects of both on one another. Porpora (2013) explains this with a reference to Karl Marx's famous quip "that man [and women] make their history but not under circumstances of their own making" (p.28).

Whereas Gidden's structuration promotes the process of evolving conceptions of structure and agency over time, Archer's morphogenetic sequence yields products of social elaboration, which can be understood in the context of their temporal positions to better understand both structure and agency (Archer, 1982). "Essentially," offers Porpora (2013), "the morphogenetic approach signifies the understanding that people always act out of structural and cultural circumstances, which their very actions then proceed to modify or sustain" (p.28). This is visually represented in Figure 2. The morphogenetic sequence represents the process of *structural elaboration* (which includes both structural and cultural realities) through an agent's actions over time. Time 1 represents the initial actions of an agent within particular social and cultural context. The context is based primarily on lived experience, and therefore, "conditioned" and reflective of the agent's reflexive abilities (though reflexivity does not exist exclusively in this first phase of the sequence). As the agent practices or "achieves" agency they will support and uphold, or challenge and possibly alter their structural circumstances (Porpora, 2013).

This is marked at Time 2. The journey from Time 2 to Time 3 represents the structural (social and cultural) interaction of the agent and the existing or altered structures they are engaged with. As time continues to pass, we inevitably arrive at Time 4, where the structural circumstances of the agent have been affected (whether sustained or changed) by their actions. At this point, the sequence begins again, where Time 4 (now a conditioned structural norm) becomes Time 1. The length of time that passes within the sequence is irrelevant to the underlying process. What is significant, is that the agent's actions effect their structural circumstances. The empirical inquiry made possible by analytic dualism of agency and structure is represented in Figure 2 by the grey box,

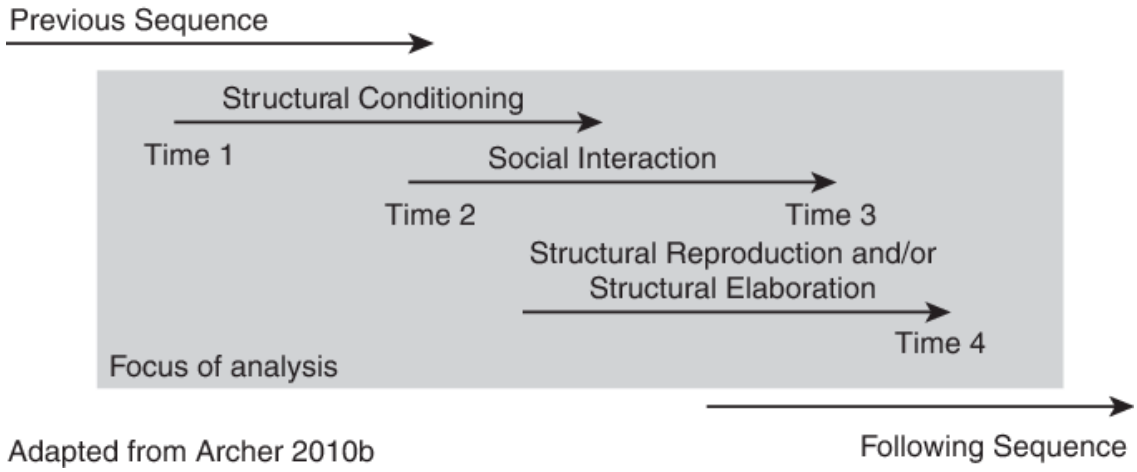

Figure 2. The morphogenetic sequence

which isolates a particular segment of time within one's life for analysis. In summarizing the morphogenetic approach Porpora (2013) asserts that

> human action is undetermined even by structure and culture taken together. Instead, even with all the structural and cultural factors taken into account, human agency always exhibits an ineluctable creativity (see Joas 1997) that defies subsumption by any kind of nomothetic laws (see Porpora 1983). Thus, even taking structure and culture fully into account, human behavior can never be explained in terms of such laws. Instead, the morphogenetic approach favors *narrative history* as the paradigmatic form of explanation with the particularities of time and place always taken into account (p. 29).

It is remarkable to me that the literature perpetuates the duality of structure and agency even within its most advanced efforts to respect them dialectically. Despite the clear and grounded arguments for analytical dualism, that appreciates the interdependence of structure and agency as dialectic, the ecological approach and morphogenetic cycle are inherently biased in their perspective. Whereas the ecological approach seeks to better understand how structure effects agency over time, the morphogenetic cycle explores how agency effects structure over time. Both concepts yield products, the ecological approach produces a construct of agency and morphogenesis produces structural elaboration. In spite of the eloquent (and genuinely

impressive) scholarship around each, we have returned to the initial argument, the proverbial "chicken and the egg debate," to satisfy the ever-present question of whether agency generates structure (echoed in the concepts of self-efficacy, SCT, and morphogenesis) or structure affects agency (echoed in the concepts of autonomy, SDT, determinism, and the ecological approach). This is not to suggest that the literature does not address such a question in great detail, particularly within the extensive work of Margaret Archer on human agency (1982, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2012)), nor to promote a reductionist approach to the concepts of agency and/or structure. In the present study, however, the expressed goal is to appreciate the importance of the ecological approach *with* the morphogenetic cycle, self-efficacy *with* autonomy, SCT *with* SDT, structure *with* agency) in developing an intrapersonal dialog amongst teachers to promote agentic conversations within the field of education.

The Chordal Triad

With my professional background in music, I want to elucidate the musical analogy offered by Emirbayer and Mische (1996) who describe the temporal dimensions of agency as a "chordal triad." This musical perspective is meant to abstract the incredibly detailed explanations they offer which establish the interconnectedness, interdependence, and plasticity of the "constitutive elements of human agency" (p.970).

First, a clarification: in Western tonal music, a chord is any combination of three or more notes which sound simultaneously. A triad, is a specific intervallic combination of three notes, which must produce one of 4 variant chords (major, minor, diminished, and/or augmented). That is, all triads are chords, but not all chords are triads. The phrase "chordal triad" is therefore somewhat redundant. With that being said, using a triad as an

analogy to explain the relationships between one's past (iterational), present (practical-evaluative), and future (projective) beliefs and experiences to generate agency is astoundingly accurate.

The three notes required to form a triad are labeled root, third, and fifth in ascending order, with the root being the lowest sounding tone. The relationship of each of these notes determines the quality of the chord i.e. major, minor, diminished, or augmented. Without employing additional musical jargon, and ultimately overtaxing one's non-musical appreciation of the analogy, as the interval (or distance) between each note is altered i.e. root to third, third to fifth, and/or root to fifth, the quality of the chord changes. This is precisely the relational affects Emirbayer and Mische (1996) point out in their explanation of the three dimensions of agency. If you imagine the root being one's past experiences (or habits), the third being one's present understanding (or judgements), and the future being one's agentic goals (or imaginings) you can appreciate how each note can be augmented or diminished to alter the overall sound of the chord, or in this case, the overall experience and understanding of one's agency.

What is particularly remarkable is the requisite presence of all three temporal variables to establish one's sense of agency. That is, the triad fails to be a triad, unless all three notes are present within their appropriate intervallic relationships. Therefore, if one augments their past experiences so much, that it inhibits their agentic abilities, agency is arguably no longer present. If one's ability to imagine their future is crippled by uncertainty, agency again ceases to be fully realized. Such as the augmentation and diminution of particular notes within the triad can be forced out of the acceptable interval to generate a proper triad. It is interesting that, in both cases, the three notes that fail to

constitute a triad are still technically a chord, just as the three temporal variables would fail to work harmoniously to generate agentic behavior, yet maintain significance within the context of reflexive agentic dialog.

This is not to suggest that one's past, present, and future iterations must adhere to predetermined guidelines for one to experience agency. Similarly, the three notes of a triad, although bound by structured intervals, do not only exist in the aforementioned ascending order: root, third, fifth with the root as the lowest sounding tone. Within the analysis of Western tonal music triads may be recognized in different *inversions*. Each inversion contains the same three requisite notes to constitute a desired chord quality, but they may be reoriented so the third or fifth become the lowest sounding tone, which alters one's aural perception of the chord, yet maintains the designation of a triad. One may similarly experience different *inversions* of agency when the dominance of each of the three temporal variables are shifted. Your actions may be influenced more by your past habits, present judgment, or imagined future, yet your agency, through reflexive practice, still exists. As articulated by Emirbayer and Mische (1996) "the ways in which people understand their own relationship to past, future, and present *make a difference* to their actions; changing conceptions of agentic possibility in relation to the structural contexts profoundly influence how actors in different periods and places see their worlds as more or less responsive to human imagination, purpose, and effort" (p.973).

Emirbayer and Mische's contributions to agency reach well beyond their musical analogy. Their codification of the temporal variables of agency into specific dimensions (iterational, projective, and practical-evaluative) not only offers stronger support for

empirical inquiry, but establishes communication and the ability to express agency across related fields.

Understanding Professional Teacher Agency

Applying the concept of agency within the fields of teaching and education has just recently gained attention in contemporary scholarship (Lasky 2005; Meyer 2011; Robinson 2012; Priestley, M., Edwards, Priestley, A., and Miller, 2012; Vaughn 2013; Jaworski, 2015; Yang, 2015; Priestley, Biesta, Philippou, and Robinson, 2015b; Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson, 2015a). Broadly speaking, it has generated valuable insight into the actions, training, retention, and subsequent power of teachers in both personal and professional contexts. The discourse within some professional arenas, however, has been met with consternation, as "teacher agency" is used to promote teachers as "change agents" within struggling school systems and curricula (Priestley et al., 2012; Priestley et al., 2015a; Robinson, 2012). In short, the treatment of the term, as an area of study as well as a tool for professional development, has experienced both confusion and frustration.

Additionally, amongst the scholarly works published on teacher agency there is a persistent challenge to honor the interdisciplinary, phenomenological, emergent complexity of agency within frameworks of empirical inquiry (Priestley et al., 2011, Parker, 2016). Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2015a) offer one of the most robust explorations of the concept and its potential for empirical inquiry in their book entitled *Teacher Agency: An Ecological Approach*. This book was admittedly a profound influence on my own initial research, and offers extraordinary examples of ethnographic research for the professional lives and experiences of teachers in Scotland, practicing

agency within nationwide curricular and school reform. Their work focuses on teacher agency within an ecological approach (detailed above) in which agency is achieved, rather than being about the capacity of actors (Priestley et al., 2015a). If such is the case, they argue, "the importance of context should be taken more seriously by public policy makers and leaders in public organizations, as such contexts may serve to disable individuals with otherwise high agentic capacity" (p. 25). The potential for growth, by teachers, students, administrators, and school systems that not only appreciate agentic capacity, but promote agentic dialog and inquiry is conspicuous and worth pursuing (Priestley et al., 2011, 2012, 2015a, 2015b).

It is from this disambiguation of agency, practiced in the present chapter, that I formulated my own agentic capacity and sought a methodological design that would facilitate my own understanding of agency through autoethnographic inquiry. What has become evident, throughout this review of literature associated with agency, is that the lived experience of actors is vital to establishing one's *sense* of agency. These experiences, however, do not exist in a vacuum, and must be contextualized within social and cultural circumstances in which the actor will and/or can take action. Ultimately, the achievement of agency that may be realized through this reflexive inquiry takes place through time. In other words, a consciousness of agentic capacity within the present (or projective-evaluative) dimension offers only a third of the full picture the ecological approach and morphogenetic sequence can offer.

The present study uses this disambiguation of agency and the concepts it yields within a temporal framework. Positioned in the context of *accountability* as a socio-cultural construct, the subsequent intrapersonal dialog will generate a critical ontology of

myself, as a teacher. As outlined in the literature above, with an operant definition and understanding of agency established, we must turn our attention to the circumstances in which I, as a teacher, pursue agency. The next chapter outlines the philosophical and methodological steps necessary to practice reflexivity as autoethnographic inquiry in the pursuit of agency.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

"To know thyself is the beginning of all wisdom."

—Socrates

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and detail the methodology used in this autoethnographic study, which explores the paradox of professional teacher agency and accountability in public education in order to promote reflexivity in teachers and raise consciousness of agentic beliefs and values. Autoethnography was chosen for its unique connections and benefits to agentic research (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Archer, 2010; Chang, 2016; Roberts & Sanders, 2005; Spry, 2001). More specifically, autoethnography is employed within the ontic and epistemic framework of critical realism, which promotes the practice and necessity of reflexivity when researching social and cultural phenomena; what Margaret Archer (2012) refers to as the *reflexive imperative*. I begin with a reference to the research questions of the study, followed by an explanation of autoethnography as method, the importance of critical realism within agentic and reflexive research, the structure and substance of data utilized in the autoethnography to follow, strategies for analysis and interpretation, and finally ethical considerations of the study.

Research Questions

1. What are the requisite components, variables, and mechanisms of agency?
    a. How are these elements effected by agentic beliefs?
    b. How do agentic beliefs effect professional teacher agency?
    c. What is the relationship between agency and structure within the paradigms of education and teaching?

2. How is accountability understood as a structural element in education?
    a. How does accountability as structure effect teacher professional agency?
3. What are the benefits of employing critically reflexive practices in teaching to promote agentic beliefs?

Methodology

With so much work promoting the significance of reflexivity in agentic research (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Archer 2003, 2007, 2010, 2012; Bochner & Ellis, 2016, Roberts & Sanders, 2005, Spry, 2001) selecting autoethnography as a methodology seemed more like a necessity than a choice. With that being said, I was personally surprised how long it took me to come to this realization. Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) define autoethnography as a qualitative method that "offers nuances, complex, and specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences, and relationships rather than general information about large groups of people" (p. 21). Initially, entertaining the idea of using autoethnography as method challenged my general understanding of research and epistemology. The present study was originally designed to establish a quantitative measurement of agency that could be generalized through school reform initiatives. As I learned more about human agency and one's disposition to express and understand it, I quickly conceded that a quantitative, exclusively objective and empirical analysis was not only impossible (Cauce and Gordon, 2018) but irresponsible and disingenuous to the reality of social science research and the extremely subjective nature of agentic beliefs (Bochner and Ellis, 2016). I found solace in Arthur Bochner's narrative (Bochner & Ellis, 2016) who similarly came to the social sciences through a quantitative (primarily statistical) lens, but ultimately transitioned to using mainly autoethnographic research

methods. In explicating his research career and agenda he references the philosophical turn of the late twentieth century in social science, where a growing number of "critiques showed how empiricism's value neutrality mask[ed] domination, conserve[d] the interest of the status quo, and reinforce[d] oppressive social practices" (p.49). Although he recognizes that the work, he was publishing was statistically significant, he found himself wondering if it was "humanly significant" (2016, p.33).

As I progressed through the doctoral program at Texas State University, and subsequently matured through the academic research process, I found myself asking similar questions. I wanted to address the concept of teacher professional agency in a deeper, more nuanced way that simply could not be addressed in black and white terms. Just as my own research on human agency wrestles with seemingly endless debates of polarized theories e.g., structure and agency, subjectivity and objectivity, qualitative and quantitative methods, et cetera; I began to appreciate the importance of what was *in-between* perceived poles. Bochner (2016) explains,

> autoethnography inhabits a space between science and art; between epistemology and ontology; between facts and meanings; between experience and language; between the highly stylized conventions of fact based reporting and the unfixed alternatives of literary, poetic, and dramatic exposition; between a cold and rational objectivity and a hot and visceral emotionality; between a commitment to document the reality of what actually happened and a desire to make readers feel the truth coursing through their blood and guts (p.66).

This is a space I sought to occupy in my own research, as an educator trying desperately to understand my own sense of agency as a fine arts teacher in central Texas. The more I studied and engaged with others on the topics of accountability and agency, the more I came to appreciate the importance of my experiences, and the significance of reflexivity in my research.

I want to note, however, that autoethnographic research should not be polarized as exclusively qualitative and therefore positioned against quantitative methods and analysis. I do not believe that this is Bochner's point at all, nor do I want to create a misconception that my initial quantitative work on agency did not have value in context to the broader concept of empirical measurement of latent social phenomena. The benefits of post-modern and post structural research in the social sciences is that both qualitative and quantitative methods and tools of analysis can and should be used to address complex phenomenological subjects (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015; Bochner and Ellis, 2016; Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002; Scott, 2010). The distinction, is that research that limits its exploration to any one mode of thinking and questioning is ultimately limiting what can be understood of the topic being researched.

Therefore, in listening to my convictions, which were echoed in the scholarship I was reading on agency and accountability, I redesigned the study to address the "common set of priorities, concerns, and ways of doing research" as an autoethnographer that are outlined by Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) as: "Foregrounding personal experience in research and writing, illustrating sense-making processes, using and showing reflexivity, illustrating insider knowledge of cultural phenomenon/experience, describing and critiquing cultural norms, experiences, and practices [and], seeking response from audiences" (p.26). Each of these elements is satisfied in the subsequent chapters which detail my experiences researching accountability and agency in the doctoral program at Texas State University (2014 to present), and teaching instrumental music in secondary schools in central Texas (2012 to 2019). Greater detail of the substance and structure of my autoethnography is provided later in this chapter. First, we must address the critical

realist framework that enables autoethnography to adequately address the philosophical needs of agentic research.

Epistemological Framework

I want to begin by affirming what critical realism is *not*. Critical realism is not a methodology, it is not an empirical system, nor is it a singular theory (Archer, Decoteau, Gorski, Little, Porpora, Rutzou, Smith, Steinmetz, and Vandenberghe, 2016). Critical realism can be understood, however, as a metatheoretical philosophical framework that draws from multiple philosophical and theoretical lenses (Frauley and Pearce, 2018). Specifically, critical realism has been described as an amalgamation of ontological realism, epistemic relativism, judgmental rationality, and cautious ethical naturalism (Archer, Decoteau, Gorski, Little, Porpora, Rutzou, Smith, Steinmetz, and Vandenberghe, 2016).

Rooted in the post-positivist crisis of the late twentieth century, critical realism has been associated first with the work of British philosopher Roy Bashkar who, in the late seventies, published his *Realist Theory of Science* (1978). Although the ideas that would mature into critical realism existed before Bashkar's work, he is credited with giving critical realism a coherent philosophical language and developing its philosophical traditions (Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002).

The significance of critical realism in the social sciences cannot be overstated (Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002). Starting from a realist perspective of ontology, critical realism asserts a stratified existence of reality. Bashkar (1978) outlines the stratification in three levels, in what he refers to as an *ontological map*. At the surface is the *empirical domain*, in which human beings experience the world directly and/or

indirectly. “The empirical domain, which in scientific contexts contains our ‘data’ or ‘facts’, is always theory-impregnated or theory-laden” (Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002, p.20). In other words, we experience and ultimately understand and know the world positivistically, through the senses, and through inherited theories of understanding and knowing the world which are validated by scientific thought and practices. Beyond the empirical is the *actual domain*, “where events happen whether we experience them or not” (Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002). This is to say, reality can and does exist removed from human experience, the proverbial tree falling in the woods. Put succinctly, “what happens in the world is not the same as that which is observed” (Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002, p.20). At the deepest level is the *domain of reality*. Completely removed from human observation and therefore comprehension, this domain contains *causal mechanisms* that effect the world we live in, and offer events that we subsequently can engage with and attempt to understand. As described by Denmark et al. (2002), “one property of reality, is that it is not transparent. It has powers and mechanisms which we cannot observe but which we can experience indirectly by their ability to cause - to make things happen in the world” (p.20). Frauley and Pearce (2010) offer a remarkably concise, yet far from exhaustive, summary of six tenants that represent what critical realism means and how it can support social theory and empirical research:

1. Reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, which is also to say that it exists independently of the mind of social actors…
2. Objects are held to belong to a *stratified* reality independent of our perception and are the products of (at least partially) unobservable, constitutive processes and relations…
3. There are unobservable features of social life that can be known to some degree and must be revealed in order to plausibly explain the existence, reproduction, and transformation of empirically apprehendable social phenomena…

4. Social structure pre-exists social action, as all human action is held to be situated activity…
5. Explanation is necessarily theoretical, and theoretical work is necessary for social scientific inquiry…
6. Critical realism is primarily concerned with ontology and so is 'thing centered,' meaning that it begins from questions about what exists… It then moves to questions of epistemology, concerns with the production of knowledge about what exists… This is to say that questions of epistemology are clearly distinguished from those of ontology.

These tenants, particularly as it relates to realist ontology, perpetuate an epistemic relativism, as our knowledge of the world is limited to the empirical domain (in which we engage the world through scientific inquiry) and attempt to theorize the actual domain (which is beyond our personal experience). That is to say, all knowledge becomes relative to the individual and their personal experiences, and their reflexive understanding of those experiences in social context. A reduction of reality to a singular domain is what Bashkar refers to as an "epistemic fallacy" since it "reduces what *is* to what can be known about it" (ibid, p.21). This is often the challenge of research in the social sciences, when researchers attempt to explain mechanisms of reality that are beyond their observation and removed from the context of their experiences. Thus, we suffer from generalizations, and a general reductionism of complex social phenomena. David Scott (2010) explains it quite eloquently:

> The key to this form of retrospective understanding is to examine sequences of causal happenings or the lived reality of the individual. The methodological point of entry into this process is the relationship between agential and structural objects. If researchers act otherwise then they are in danger of reifying the properties of the relationship by treating elements of the causal sequence as generalized to a group of people and not addressing how those people were actually implicated in the structural relationship, which may result in a misunderstanding of the nature of that relationship. The indicator therefore has to reflect the relationship between structure and agency in particular cases, and if researchers want to generalize then they have to examine the propensity of that relationship to be replicated in other cases (p.92).

This holds particular significance to the present study as I hope to reveal causal mechanisms within the dialectic of accountability (as an educational structure) and professional teacher agency, through my own experiences expressed autoethnographically. I am recognizing Scott's (2010) call to "examine the lived reality of the individual" as the autoethnographic method. Spry (2001) asserts that "autoethnography is both a method and a text to diverse interdisciplinary praxes. Its roots trace the postmodern 'crisis of representation' in anthropological writing where autoethnography is a radical reaction to realist agendas in ethnography and sociology 'which privilege the researcher over the subject, method over the subject matter, and maintain commitments to outmoded conceptions of validity, truth , and generalizability'" (p.710). Roberts and Sanders (2005), reference Spry's work, and go further to encourage a temporality to ethnographic research as it pertains to reflexivity. This folds into the aforementioned research from chapter 2 on the *ecological approach* to agency and the significance of temporality to understand social structures and agentic beliefs.

Subsequently, Margaret Archer, who is another prominent figure and scholar in critical realism, addresses similar concerns and issues with reflexivity, realism, and social theory by advocating for the *morphogenetic approach* (also referenced in chapter 2) as an explanatory framework for examining the interplay between structure and agency and their outcomes, and as a tool kit for developing the analytical histories of emergence of particular social formations, institutional structures, and organizational forms.

Lastly, critical realism calls for a healing of the qualitative and quantitative divide (Scott, 2010). In the present study, several methods are employed that may be codified as either qualitative or quantitative, but such a designation is performative at best, to uphold

the systems of thought we have inherited in academic research. For the critical realist, there is only an effort to adequately communicate using whatever tools serve the research best. Labels may be employed (such as qualitative or quantitative) to position methods, theories, and analyses, but only in service to developing the context in which the information and ideas are formed to ultimately generate a greater understanding of the subject being explored. Scott (2010) references this as the *pragmatic argument*, in critical realist research in education. "Truth is understood" he explains, "in terms of the practical effects of what is believed, and particularly, how useful it is… making methodological choices per se means that [the researcher] is formulating a belief that the choice [they] make is a better choice than the one [they] did not make because it will lead to a more truthful representation of what [they] are trying to portray" (pp.24-25).

With that, I will use the next section to elucidate the structure and substance of the study that follows, paying particular attention to the selection and sequence of artifacts used to create the autoethnography developed through later chapters.

Structure and Substance

> When we do autoethnography, we study and write culture from the perspective of the self. When we do autoethnography, we look inward - into our identities, thoughts, feelings and experiences - and outward - into our relationships, communities, and cultures. As researchers, we try to take readers/audiences through the same process back and forth inside and out (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015, p.46).

A crucial part of my journey of self-discovery and critical reflection has been my time in the doctoral program at Texas State University between 2014 and 2021. I have recognized, in the research process, that revelations and discoveries that I have had relating to my identity as a teacher and my understanding of accountability and professional agency are directly correlated to the literature I explored and assignments I

completed during my graduate studies. I consider everything that has happened over the past 6 years a part of my "awakening" as understood by Maxine Greene (1977) or the raising of my consciousness as understood by Paolo Freire (1998). This intellectual and emotional posture has positioned me to more fully appreciate and author the autoethnography that follows. The subsequent chapters utilize artifacts and narratives of particular experiences from my life serving as a public school teacher and studying in graduate school at Texas State over the past six years. Both the artifacts and narratives reflect my personal and professional journey from initially recognizing my frustrations and desires to know and do more as an educator, to my present position as an assistant professor of music education working with future educators, and ultimately speak to future possibilities of my research and work to promote agentic dialog in education.

As suggested by autoethnographic scholars I am using a variety of sources to support my autoethnography (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015; Chang, 2008; Bochner and Ellis, 2016). The artifacts have been numbered sequentially across all three chapters to avoid segregating their connections to the autoethnography that evolves over the three chapters. The artifacts reflect both my thoughts and work around particular themes in my research and developing understanding of structure and agency, as well as, official documents related to my experiences with accountability as a public school teacher. I use the term artifact intentionally to represent the temporality and authenticity of each element that has been curated within the autoethnography. In other words, the artifacts were not written *for* the autoethnography, but they do represent primary sources from my life, that reflect thoughts, reactions, responses, and perceptions of what I was experiencing, as well as, what others (the school and district administrators I was

working with) perceived and interpreted from my work and actions as a public school teacher. The narratives, however, were specifically written for this study and correspond directly to the selected artifacts.

Chapter four presents three artifacts (1-3) related to my research and developing understanding of accountability for performing arts teachers in Central Texas. More importantly, chapter four conceptualizes accountability as an agentic structure within education. Chapter five presents 3 artifacts (4-6) related to my personal and professional understanding of teaching and learning in order to contextualize my identity, actions, and thoughts as an educator in the subsequent chapter. Chapter six presents 8 artifacts (7-16) and 4 narratives (1-4) pertaining to my personal and professional experiences with three specific forms of accountability: financial, academic, and professional. A detailed outline of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter IV: In Search of Accountability

Chapter four includes three artifacts numbered sequentially (1-3). The artifacts I selected are assignments I completed as a part of the course sequence for the doctoral program in School Improvement at Texas State between 2014 and 2017. All three assignments were a part of my initial exploration into personal and professional frustration with systems of accountability (or lack thereof) for fine arts teachers in the state of Texas, which was originally the proposed topic of my dissertation. The more I researched, however, I discovered that the challenges and frustration I was experiencing were greater than the socio-political structures of my job as a public-school teacher. In other words, I quickly recognized that identifying issues of accountability was only a part of the larger systemic problems affecting me and those I had engaged in my research.

Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that the issues of accountability, and the systems that created and sustained them, where structural aspects of agentic problems echoed in the work of Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2015a).

The first artifact is an assignment I completed as a part of the beginning qualitative research course I took in the fall of 2015 taught by Dr. Clarena Larrotta. The assignment includes an interview with Thomas Waggoner, the former director of fine arts for the Texas Education Agency, and a corresponding survey that was generated from an analysis of the interview pertaining to perceptions, understandings, and issues of accountability for fine arts teachers in the state of Texas. Although I utilized a grounded theory framework for the assignment, it is important to reiterate, that within the critical realist paradigm labels and use of multiple methods of research are less important than the application of the results in constructing the context in which the researcher performs their narrative. I do not consider what I am presenting as "mixed methods" or "multidisciplinary" per se, although both terms are used to support critical realist and autoethnographic work (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015l; Denmark, Ekström, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2002; Frauley and Pearce, 2007; Scott 2010; Shipway 2011). The intentions of using this assignment as an artifact in my autoethnography, is to better position you as reader and audience, to the evolution of my thinking and understanding the paradox of accountability and agency in education.

The second artifact is an assignment I completed in the fall 2014 as a part of the philosophy in education course taught by Dr. Duncan Wait. The assignment was a reading reflection for Patti Lather's (2007) *Getting Lost* which details her experiences as a researcher and what she refers to as the "double(d) science" of ethnographic work (most

notably realized in *Troubling the Angels* (1995)). As I would come to realize, Lather's work has proven to be an immense influence and inspiration to my own research. Artifact #2 argues that teachers experience what I refer to as a "double(d) accountability" in which they are required to support the very systems of accountability they seek to challenge through performative professional expectations.

The third artifact is an assignment I completed in the spring of 2015 as a part of the leadership and organizational change course taught by Dr. Barry Aidman. This assignment utilizes the "Four Organizational Frames" developed by Bolman and Deal (2013) to explore the concept of accountability, specifically for fine arts teachers in the state of Texas, and includes several personal and professional testimonies to support my analysis. The assignment, similar to my work on Lather's *Double(d) Science,* become extremely influential in validating my use of autoethnography and further developing my understanding and appreciation of autoethnographical research. I recognized after completing this assignment that my experiences with accountability where significant, and that my research could give other teachers voice in the perpetual dialog of school improvement and reform. Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) refer to this as *conceptualist autoethnography*, in which "personal stories become the mechanism for conveying and critiquing cultural experiences, breaking silences, and reclaiming voices. Conceptualist autoethnographies use first-, second-, and third-person narration and are highly reflexive" (p.88). The use of these assignments as artifacts and the intentional shift in voice are all a part of brining the audience in and out of my own experiences with accountability (Chang, 2008) .

As mentioned earlier, I came to realize that the issues I was articulating in my research on accountability where not the ultimate problem I was facing. I discovered, through these assignments and my research on professional teacher agency, that accountability only represented the socio-political structure in which I practiced my sense of professional agency as a teacher. It was therefore only half of what I would need to explore to fully recognize the importance of reflexivity and the dialectic relationship of agency and structure, which, through my continued research, matured to represent accountability and teacher agency paradoxically.

Chapter V: Preparing the Narratives

Chapter five includes three artifacts numbered sequentially (4-6). The artifacts I selected are assignments I completed for both the doctoral program in School Improvement and the masters of arts program in Applied Philosophy and Ethics at Texas State between 2014 and 2017. Chapter 5 is designed to introduce the audience to who I was (and who I still consider myself to be) as an educator and more adequately prepare the narratives to follow in chapter 6. It includes three assignments that reflect my own journey of self-discovery as a teacher and scholar. An identity I would come to fully appreciate through the work of Joe Kincheloe (2005). The first assignment was completed in the fall of 2014 as a part of an adult learning course taught by Dr. Sarah Nelson-Baray. The assignment (somewhat prophetically) was to author an autoethnography of ourselves as educators who were simultaneously discovering what it meant to be new doctoral student.

I utilized both a survey, that solicited responses from colleagues I worked with at San Marcos High School, and a series of interviews that included my mother, one of my

students, one of my colleagues (who was a former student), and my wife; to collect data in order to produce both a video and written ethnography. I ask that you watch the video which is available through a YouTube link embedded in the text, *before* reading chapter 5. The video includes a word cloud comprised of responses from the survey, in which I asked participants to describe me using one word, as well as a chronological series of photos of myself and a sound track which includes excerpts from each of the interviews and Arvo Pärts *Spiegel im Spiegel* which in German translates to "mirror in the mirror" and appropriately offers a musical representation of reflection.

Artifact #5 is comprised of two excerpts from my doctoral comprehensive exam completed in the fall of 2017. They articulate my understanding of self, as an "artist and teacher," and my struggle with the concept of "schooling versus education." Both excerpts offer insight to the professional and personal struggles I was facing as a public school teacher. Chapter six intentionally begins in the winter of 2017 leading into the conclusion of my course work in the doctoral program and my comprehensive exam, which predates this artifact. I mention this to make clear that it is not necessary to read these artifacts in chronological order. The intention of my autoethnography is not to build a chronological history of my thoughts and research, but rather, provide insight to where I was intellectually, emotionally, and professionally throughout the years from which I practice reflexivity. That is to say, in order to fully understand my own sense of agency as a public school teacher, and to practice reflexivity with authenticity, I must be positioned in the present, with the reader, curating my recollections with the significance I believe they bring my autoethnography.

Artifact #6 contains two assignments I completed as a part of my coursework outside of the school of education in the department of philosophy at Texas State in the summer of 2017. While studying in the philosophy department I had the great privilege of working with Dr. Bob Fischer, Dr. Vincent Luzzi, Dr. Jo Ann Carson, and Dr. Craig Hanks, all of whom were extremely influential in my thinking about education and learning. The first assignment addresses the value of *Universal Teaching* in education, as referenced by the work of Jacques Rancière (1991) and which profoundly impacted my understanding of who I am as an educator and how I facilitate learning in educational environments. The second assignment reflects what I came to refer to as the *Inauthenticity* of teaching, as referenced in the work of Jena Paul Sartre (1943). Both assignments represent my frustrations with what I understood to be my role and responsibilities as an educator in public school.

The goal of chapter five, again, is to build a better connection with you as the reader, to fully understand and appreciate the context of the artifacts and narratives I share in chapter six.

Chapter VI: The Narratives

Chapter six includes 8 artifacts numbered sequentially (7-16) and 4 narratives, also numbered sequentially (1-4). The chapter is organized into three distinct sections which represent three forms of accountability I experienced as a fine arts teacher while working at San Marcos High School between 2017 to 2019. I offer the specific campus and time frame of my experiences because it is important, when doing autoethnography through a critical realist lens, to not generalize in shared experience and offer a clear context in which one's stories are being shared (Bochner and Ellis, 2016; Frauley and

Pearce, 2007). I know that my experiences are unique to the time and place in which I was teaching. The expressed goal of this study, however, and that of ethnographic work more broadly, is to "cast [my] vision over experiences through which [I've] lived, and invite others into the conversation about the meanings of these events" (Bochner and Ellis, 2016, p.46). Only then can I offer a critique of the choices I made in the context that I made them, and invite others to question the systems in which we operate as teachers in the unyielding goal of making ourselves better for the good of those we serve, which includes our students, our families, and our community. As explained by Bochner and Ellis (2016) "we want our readers to see themselves in us. In this way, perhaps they can feel momentarily relieved of some of their loneliness. Performing these lived-through dramas, we transform private troubles into public plight, making evocative autoethnography powerful, comforting, dangerous, and culturally essential" (p.87).

Each narrative is accompanied by a series of primary artifacts related to the various forms of accountability I have designated, interpreted as I have experienced them. I have chosen three instances in my career as a string teacher in San Marcos CISD (which lasted from the spring of 2012 to the spring of 2019) that I believe represent moments of professional accountability that directly affected my sense of agency and ultimately my ability to do my job as I believe it needed to be done. Santoro (2018) refers to this as the *demoralization* of educators. She explains, "for teachers experiencing demoralization, the moral dilemma is not what they should do to be a good teacher, but that they cannot do what they believe a good teacher should do in the face of policies, mandates, or institutional norms" (p.43).

Financial accountability. The first section which includes artifacts #7-10 and narrative #1, pertains to "financial accountability." This is a form of accountability that I believe is relatively unique to fine and performing arts educators who are often responsible for a wide range of resources e.g., instruments, music libraries, uniforms, et cetera; as well as student fundraising and in many cases travel. My experience deals directly with the accounting of finances for a student organization which I sponsored at the high school (the Tri-M Music Honor Society) as well as my orchestra program's booster club.

The first section on financial accountability begins with artifact #7, which is a transcript of emails that detail initial concerns expressed by the assistant director of finance for the school district and evolves into a full financial audit of my orchestra program, the student organization I sponsored, as well as the orchestra booster club. I want you to know as the reader that I have not editorialized any of the correspondence. I am including all written communication on the matter between myself and the finance department for the school district in chronological order. I encourage you to pay particular attention to the tone, frequency, demands, expectations, and timeline of the correspondence. Artifact #8 is the official reprimand I received when the audit was completed. Artifact #9 is my official response to the letter of reprimand. Both artifacts were filed with the office of human resources in accordance to district policy.

I then provide the first narrative of my autoethnography which highlights significant moments I experienced during the process of the audit and when receiving the written reprimand which, summarily, represent the system of financial accountability that existed in my district at the time. I want to offer this temporal clarification as I know that

several aspects of the financial accountability teachers and campuses were held to were intentionally changed and/or improved after my experience. I conclude this first section with artifact #10, which is a summary of my formal evaluation completed under the T-TESS model for teacher accountability for the 2017-2018 academic year. The purpose of providing my T-TESS evaluation is to offer perspective on the different systems of accountability teachers are held to. That is to say, teachers are held accountable to professional "curricular" standards of teaching and learning as established by their state and district, as well as, professional "extracurricular" standards that are both written and unwritten and rooted in the socio-cultural and political environments of the communities they teach e.g., chaperoning school trips and dances, sponsoring student organizations, serving on committees, attending student sporting events and concerts et cetera.

Academic accountability. The second section includes artifacts #11-13 and narratives #2 and #3 pertaining to "academic accountability." Artifact #11 includes two written reprimands I received in the spring of 2018. Both reprimands address my failure to submit grades by the communicated deadline, which had been a consistent challenge for me in previous years. Artifact #12 is third reprimand I received int eh spring of 2018 The second reprimand pertaining to a disqualification I received at the spring 2018 UIL Concert and Sight-Reading event (which is discussed in chapter four). I follow both artifact #11 and #12 with narratives #2 and #3 respectfully detailing my experience receiving them and the dialog that accompanied them *before, during, and after* they were received (Roberts and Sanders, 2005). I choose these artifacts, as I believe they represent another juxtaposition of the spoken and unspoken expectations teachers are held accountable to. Artifact #11 reflected a failure on my part as a teacher to meet established

professional standards and expectations. Artifact #12, however, pertained more to the personal and political opinions of what my role as an orchestra director should be according to the administration. In other words, artifact #12 shows that I was being held accountable to unwritten standards that reflected the sentiment and professional opinions of my administration as opposed to published professional standards within the state. I conclude this section on academic accountability with a summary of the formal T-TESS evaluation I received for the 2018-2019 academic year. It is important to note, that artifact #10 (the summary of my T-TESS evaluation for the 2017-2018 academic year) was completed within two months of the reprimands and subsequent narratives provided in this section on academic accountability.

Professional accountability. The last section includes artifacts #14-16 and narrative #4. Artifact #14 is a letter of reprimand I received after cancelling an annual student leadership retreat and workshop for the high school orchestra program that occurred in early August before the start of the 2018-2019 academic year. I cancelled the trip after consulting with the student orchestra officers who were responsible for organizing the retreat when a question of housing was raised for trans-gender students in the orchestra program.

For context, the retreat took place out of town and included a two night stay in cabins on a recreation/camp site in central Texas. At this point, in 2018, The orchestra program had facilitated the retreat for both the middle school and high school string students for 4 consecutive years. The district delivered a decision at the end of the summer that students that identified as trans-gender would be required to sleep in a separate cabin from their peers. Having found conflict with this decision and not being

comfortable with the event under such circumstances I cancelled the trip and choose to facilitate the retreat in town without any requirements for overnight stay. Artifact #15 is my written response to the reprimand I received during the in town retreat. I have included a brief note that there was not a formal response to Artifact #15 by the campus or district administration. Narrative #4 articulates my experiences advocating for my trans-gender students. This final section on professional accountability concludes with artifact #16, a signed copy of my letter of resignation.

Analysis and Interpretation

For the analysis and interpretation of the autoethnographic data presented in chapters four through six, I present my findings in chapter seven by using strategies suggested and outlined by Heewon Chang in his *Autoethnography as Method* (2008). One of the first distinctions Chang makes in autoethnographic research is the importance of differentiating analysis and interpretation. As I have intentionally included a wide variety of data sources including primary documents, interviews, surveys, video, dialog, and personal narrative; an analysis of the data is needed to identify and select important themes and topics for interpretation. Chang (2008) clarifies the difference of analysis and interpretation by citing the work of Wolcott (1994) and Creswell (1998). He explains "data analysis is an activity directed to 'the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them- in short, how things work'" (Wolcott, 1994, p.12, as cited in Chang, 2008, p.127); and data interpretation entails "focusing on finding cultural meanings beyond data. [That is] interpretation 'involves making sense of data'" (Creswell, 1998, p.144 as cited in Chang, 2008, p.127).

Chang (2008) offers the following ten strategies for analysis and interpretation in no particular order with no expectation that all strategies would be utilized within a single study:

1. Searching for recurring topics
2. Looking for cultural themes
3. Identifying exceptional occurrences
4. Analyzing inclusion and omission
5. Connecting the present with the past
6. Analyzing relationships between self and others
7. Comparing yourself with other people's cases
8. Contextualizing broadly
9. Comparing with social science constructs and ideas [and]
10. Framing with theories

Needless to say, the process of analyzing and interpreting autoethnographic research can be quite complicated as you utilize these and other strategies to engage multiple forms of data over extended periods of time, within different social, cultural, and political contexts, through several different voices and perspectives (Chang, 2008, Bochner and Ellis, 2016). In spite of its perceived challenges, the ultimate goal is to engage the data without artificially separating or superficially organizing it to be easier for either analysis or interpretation. Rather, as Chang (2008) describes, you must find *balance*. "Data analysis and interpretation are often conducted concurrently and their activities are intertwined… analysis and interpretation should be seen not in conflict with each other, but as a balancing act between fracturing and connecting, between zooming in and zooming out, between science and art" (Chang, 2008, p.128).

In appreciation of this perspective, my findings will not be organized in terms of the autoethnographic methods I will use in my analysis and interpretation. Rather, a more organic and artistic presentation of my findings will be used to represent the fluidity and interconnectedness of topics and seven themes in what appropriately reflects the dialectic

exchange of structure and agency within the ecological and morphogenetic approaches (Archer, 1995; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). I will position myself, through reflexivity, in the iterational (past), practical-evaluative (present), and projective (future) dimensions of my agential experiences within the structures of accountability outlined in chapter four using Bolman and Deals *Four Frames*. Within each of these temporal dimensions as originally posited by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and applied to ethnographic research on teacher agency by Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2015a), I will explore my own sense of agency and how it is paradoxically affected by systems of accountability.

Ethical Considerations

Autoethnography, like all research, presents unique ethical challenges and risks (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015; Bochner and Ellis, 2016; Forber-Pratt, 2015; Rambo, 2007). Rambo (2007), after seeking to publish her autoethnographic work, reflected on her challenges with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and described her experience as "handing the IRB an unloaded gun" (p. 363). She defines autoethnography as "reflexive, personal, and emotional" and states that it "often serves as cultural critique posing more questions than it answers. It is a moment in an open, ongoing dialogue with oneself and an audience" (Rambo, 2007, p.364). She suggests that the challenges of the autoethnographic method have less to do with the telling of one's story, and more to do with the willingness of others to listen, particularly when challenging institutional politics and culture. Carolyn Ellis elaborates this point and offers clarification to the ethical responsibilities we hold as autoethnographers to do no harm.

> We write about our emotions, often those associated with pain. Thus, there's always the chance that our stories will cause discomfort. We can never completely get rid of that feeling, nor would we want to. But we

> should do everything in our power to minimize hurt (Bochner and Ellis, 2016, p.151).

In practicing autoethnography, Ellis (2015) promotes a *relational ethic of care* referring to "how people connect to each another in their various roles and relationships from moment to moment" (p. 154) particularly in how characters and actors are portrayed in the authors stories and narratives. Tami Spry (2001, as cited by Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015, p.96) offers several precautions which can and should be followed to support relational ethics by avoiding self-indulgence, blaming and shaming, heroics, framing self/others as victims, self-righteousness, and disengagement. I will enact such precautions in my own writing, analysis, and interpretation of my lived experience, as I recognize the multitude of individuals that are included directly and indirectly in the telling of my stories. In order to offer additional protection to the identities of unnamed individuals in my narratives, I have elected to create composite characters specifically for *administrators* and *colleagues* referenced in my work. I do this not only to protect them, but to encourage readers to appreciate the social, cultural, and political roles *all* administrators and colleagues play in developing and establishing systems of accountability and one's sense of agency as a teacher.

CHAPTER IV

IN SEARCH OF ACCOUNTABILITY

> "People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does."
>
> —Michael Foucault

This chapter begins my autoethnography, detailing my understanding of agency (as outlined in chapter two) in context to structures of accountability (detailed in artifact #3). The artifacts and narratives that constitute my autoethnography are provided in the following three chapters and are based on my experiences as a graduate student in the doctoral program for School Improvement at Texas State, and as a public school performing arts teacher in Central Texas between 2014 and 2019.

The artifacts included in this chapter represent early scholarship in accountability for fine arts teachers completed at the beginning of my graduate studies a Texas State. Artifact #1 offers an initial exploration into accountability of fine arts educators in the state of Texas. Artifact #2 challenges the concept accountability for public school educators as a *double(d) science*, referencing the work of Patti Lather (2012). Lastly, Artifact #3 utilizes Bolman and Deals (2017) *Four Organizational Frames* to conceptualize accountability as a socio-cultural and political structure in the agentic environments of public school fine arts teachers.

The chapter offers both an historical perspective of my critical inquiry into the personal and professional challenges I was experiencing within systems of teaching and learning, as well as, a detailed exploration of accountability for fine and performing arts teachers in the state of Texas. Both aspects of this chapter work together to form the structural context necessary to understand and appreciate the artifacts and narratives of chapter six.

Artifact #1 - Starting the Conversation: Identifying a Problem

As a former public school fine arts educator, I experienced immense confusion and frustration over the multitude of assessments and accountability systems that are employed to evaluate, and in many cases, validate fine arts teachers and programs. In a seemingly endless quest to better understand teacher accountability, specifically in the state of Texas, I found myself wanting for consistent, reliable, and equitable accountability measures. The research that follows is designed to generate a critique of accountability for fine arts educators in the state of Texas based on my own experiences as a secondary instrumental music teacher between 2012 to 2019. In reflecting on my experiences, I use *critical inquiry* to develop and affect a collective consciousness of accountability for educators across all subjects and an understanding of accountability within the larger context of the varying educational structures teachers operate within. As explained by Crotty (1998) "Critical inquiry cannot be viewed as a discrete piece of action that achieves its objectives and comes to a close. With every action taken, the context changes and we must critique our assumptions again" (p.157). This is, therefore, not a search for *the answer*, but the continuation of a long-standing critical conversation about teacher accountability that must be perpetuated in order to evolve in the hopes of producing real change.

During my graduate studies at Texas State University, I fulfilled the requirements of a course on qualitative research in 2016 by collecting data associated with accountability and assessment of fine arts teachers in public schools by interviewing the former director of Fine Arts for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Mr. Thomas H. Waggoner. The interview was designed (see Data Collection Protocol in Appendix A) as

a *Grounded Theory study*, to move beyond a description of accountability in order to generate or discover a theory of what is lacking within systems of accountability for fine arts teachers in the state of Texas and how these issues are being addressed from the perspective of someone who was responsible for them, namely, Mr. Waggoner (Creswell, 2017). Having met and worked with Mr. Waggoner through professional fine arts organizations in the past, I conducted the interview informally at my home in San Marcos, TX. The interview was recorded, in order to generate a transcript and analyzed as an oral history narrative (Creswell, 2017).

The analysis of the interview generated a number of themes and questions that were used to create a qualitative survey for fine arts teachers from across the state of Texas. To encourage a broad perspective on accountability for fine arts, all fine arts courses that are traditionally taught in Texas public schools were included i.e., secondary school Music (Band, Choir, and Orchestra), Art, Dance, and Theater; as well as, primary school Art, Music and Theater. The survey consists of ten questions which were sent by e-mail to multiple districts across the state of Texas using Survey Monkey. The first three questions pertain to professional demographics i.e. How long have you been teaching? What fine arts subject do you teach? and What grade level do you teach? The fourth and fifth questions ask about teacher satisfaction with Professional Development opportunities and professional assessment measures. The first five questions all utilize prescribed answers that participants chose from a list of responses. The last five questions are free-response and deal with whom teachers are held accountable, what teachers believe to be the best form of assessment for themselves, how individual teachers define

accountability, how accountability affects teachers, and teachers' opinion on standardized testing for the fine arts.

The survey was intended to verify the assumptions and opinions of Mr. Waggoner on fine arts accountability through his lived experience as a teacher at the secondary and post-secondary levels, a district fine arts administrator, and as the former director of fine arts for TEA. The development of the survey questions from the data collected in the interview reinforces the efforts to generate a theory of action from the collected data and analysis, which resonates with both the epistemological lens of critical inquiry as well as the methodological framework of Grounded Theory (Creswell, 2017).

The Challenge of Concernment for Accountability in the Arts

The interview with Mr. Waggoner was analyzed as an oral history narrative. A consent form was signed (Appendix B) to inform Mr. Waggoner of my intentions with the research. The interview questions were extremely broad to encourage Mr. Waggoner to explore each topic through conversation. A transcript of the interview was used to identify *in vivo* codes that were aggregated to generate themes that informed the questions presented in the subsequent survey (Creswell, 2017).

Mr. Waggoner's expertise was conferred with biographical information supplied through the first question of the interview. He outlined his career in education which is easily corroborated with the brief biography available on the Austin Youth Symphony website, an organization Mr. Waggoner helped found. Mr. Waggoner spoke of his first teaching position as director of bands at William B Travis High School in Austin ISD from 1972 to 1981. He then was hired as associate director of bands at Texas State University (formally known as Southwest Texas State University) from 1981 to 1987. He

served as the director of bands for the University of Mississippi in Oxford from 1987 to 1991 before returning to Texas to work as the administrative supervisor of Fine Arts in Austin ISD from 1991 to 2000. At this point in his career Mr. Waggoner made a significant vertical leap in educational administration by accepting the director of fine arts position with TEA after more than 19 years as an educator at the secondary and post-secondary levels, and 9 years as a district fine arts administrator. He served as the director of fine arts for TEA for eleven years, until the position and department were cut from the structure of TEA due to funding concerns in 2011. At the time of the interview Mr. Waggoner was working at the University of Texas as the director of fine arts education in the College of Fine Arts.

In Mr. Waggoner's biographical information, it is important to note the time frames in which he participated in various levels of education. Having entered the field of teaching public-school in 1972, Mr. Waggoner was teaching at the start of the accountability movement in education (Dorman, 1973; Labuta, 1972; Rosenshine & McGaw, 1972; Turner, 1977). This situates his career and experiences in a particularly important place to speak of accountability for the fine arts, having lived through the "attempt to establish responsibilities and to determine rigorously the extent to which the responsibilities [were to be] met" by teachers in public schools (Rosenshine & McGaw, 1972, p.640).

In the interview, Mr. Waggoner communicates his belief that "fine arts should be a *foundations* rather than an *enrichment* subject," and "that it should be assessed for accountability." This is desperately important to the critique of fine arts accountability, as a call for such suggests its absence.

Mr. Waggoner also expresses concerns for what was currently in place to evaluate fine arts programs through House Bill 5 (HB5) of the 2016 Texas Legislative session. The Bill called for a "community and student engagement" committee to be established in every district "to showcase areas of excellence and success as well as recognize areas in need of improvement and set future goals valued in the community" (TASA). Within the framework of the community and student engagement committee, fine arts is listed as the first of nine factors for which a district and each campus should be evaluated. Although Mr. Waggoner supported this evaluation system to promote fine arts accountability, he raised concern over its structure and validity. The state does not determine the criteria by which the nine prescribed factors are evaluated, nor by whom the evaluation process must be administered. It is completely left to the individual districts to form a committee that will author and address the criteria of evaluation and report their findings to the state. Mr. Waggoner's concern lied with his belief that the general public and school administrators frequently misunderstand fine arts standards and perpetuate evaluations of fine arts programs (formally and informally) that focus on "the success of competitions rather than the quality of the fine arts program," which includes a great list of variables and factors of *success* (which can be defined in multiple ways for each program and grade level) which are often overlooked for basic competitive outcomes like trophies and rankings. Mr. Waggoner explained that he had developed his own criteria to evaluate fine arts programs from his experience as a fine arts teacher and administrator and that he shared the criteria with several districts, but that there is currently "no way to know how the evaluations are being done statewide."

Furthermore, Mr. Waggoner promoted state standardized assessments of the arts. Although there is not a standardized test for fine arts in the state of Texas currently, Mr. Waggoner spoke of conversations between TEA and the University Interscholastic League (UIL) to use the Concert and Sight Reading and/or Solo and Ensemble events in band, choir, and orchestra as a form of assessment for secondary public-school music programs. Mr. Waggoner cautioned however, that UIL contests would only represent one aspect of fine arts programs, limited to music, and that the success of such programs should not be narrowed to contest results alone.

Mr. Waggoner concluded our conversation on accountability by reiterating his belief that the fine arts should be "moved over into the foundations curriculum and be part of the [state standardized exam, or] STAR test… because the arts are critically important to students." He strongly advocated for a fully integrated curriculum that benefited directly and explicitly from fine arts.

The transcript of the interview was reviewed for initial codes related to accountability and revealed two themes, in both frequency and expressed importance. First, there does not appear to be a clear understanding of accountability for fine arts educators in the state of Texas and second, there are misconceptions of UIL contests as formal and/or valid systems of accountability in the fine arts.

Questioning My Peers

A qualitative survey was designed using the *in vivo* codes present in Mr. Waggoner's interview to address themes related to misconceptions of accountability for fine arts educators in the state of Texas. The survey data was then analyzed according to Jensen's (2010) multidimensional descriptive analysis of qualitative surveys, using case-

oriented synthesis. Data was collected from multiple districts across the state of Texas. 114 surveys were collected and coded to establish case oriented empirical synthesis by "grouping cases (not characteristics) on the basis of corresponding combinations of characteristics into one or more *types*" (Jenson, 2010, 3.4.2 Second-level analysis: Multidimensional description, paragraph 5). These types were defined as factors contributing to the misconceptions and current practices of fine arts accountability. Although the *Boolean* method could have been used for a more formal analysis of the combinations and characteristics at the case level (Jenson, 2010), I did not find it necessary or appropriate for the scope of the research at hand.

A matrix of codes that have been cross referenced and color coded by subject (see Appendix C) helped to reveal broad categories within the responses that were interconnected to multiple questions. I restructured the data by frequency within each subject and consolidated the data by the individual codes without the breakdown of each subject (see Appendix D) to better appreciate the unique connections of the themes and categories across the different questions.

The survey data ultimately supported the two themes most prominent in the interview with Mr. Waggoner i.e. there is not a clear understanding of accountability within the fine arts amongst practicing teachers, and UIL contests breed misconceptions of assessment and accountability within the fine arts.

Perpetuating Misunderstandings and Misconceptions

As stated previously, as a former fine arts teacher in the state of Texas, I was frustrated by what *I believed* to be misunderstandings and misconceptions of accountability in education for the fine arts, and I was quick to dismiss such beliefs as

isolated and unique to my own experiences. Now, having interviewed the former director of fine arts for TEA and having surveyed my colleagues from across the state, the research supports my beliefs and confirms both misunderstandings and misconceptions of accountability for fine arts educator. Utilizing and promoting the process of critical inquiry, I believe accountability should be further problematized by the various codes and themes that were represented in the data. The process of interviewing, surveying, and analyzing my colleagues about accountability proved to be both rewarding and challenging, as I continue to search for my own voice as a researcher and educator studying accountability in public-school arts programs, without polluting the data sets with my own limited perspectives and experiences. I have found, one of my greatest challenges as a researcher is objective analysis. The surveys served as a better tool for data collection, in avoiding my own positionality in the questioning, although I did experience issues with wording and phrasing in the questions that yielded a multitude of interpretations and unique responses. This, however, ultimately served as a benefit to the research in promoting the theme of misunderstanding accountability in the fine arts, as the apparent interpretations of the word "accountability" were as varied as their manifestation in the professional lives of the educators who responded to the survey.

Accountability As We Know It

The question may be raised then: where are we now? Needless to say, countless actions have been taken to author, edit, (re)design, model and support multiple theories and requests for accountability in education since the nineteen seventies. Again, the inherent limitations of these actions are felt most significantly by the fine arts, and other subjects outside the realm of perceived (and misunderstood) "core curriculum." Fine arts

have consistently suffered from a lack of attention and misguided supervision. At the same time that national educational organizations and scholars were expressing serious concern for accountability in public education, fine arts scholars and professionals were struggling to be heard through the cacophonous drone of what was later to be identified as the standardization of educational expectations and assessment for the sake of generating so called *accountability measures* for American schooling.

Dorman responded to the latest trends of his time in educational accountability in 1973 with a *call-to-arms* specifically for music educators seeking "grass roots accountability." She offers an auto-ethnographic perspective, in which she recalled an observation of one of her sixth-grade classes where she was posed with the question: why does everyone have to do the same thing all the time? Dorman recognized in that moment that she had become "more concerned with consistency than with creativity" in her classroom (p.46). Almost 50 years later, her words and experiences are still pertinent to today's conversations on accountability in education, particularly in the fine arts:

> We could become much more effective as teachers if we viewed ourselves as facilitators with students- facilitators who respond to the individual learner in terms of what he needs in order to know what he is and what he can become. Accountability would then become more than assignments and evaluation; it would become an integration of knowledge of content, a knowledge of how to teach, and a knowledge of human behavior (p.46).

It is not surprising, in accordance with the notion of historic recurrence, that the national dialogue has turned back to similar conversations in education with debates over curricular initiatives such as STEM to STEAM, and subsequent arguments over educational value. Where has creativity gone in our curriculum? What have we sacrificed to established standards? How has the continued standardization of our curriculum

benefited our teaching and learning? And how do such concerns affect measures of accountability?

As a part of this dialog, Labuta contributed a critical perspective of assessment and accountability measures for music educators in 1972. In spite of the date of Labuta's work, I would hesitate to claim that much has changed in nearly 50 years. It is genuinely disturbing to read literature of the 1970s and recognize that the battle to establish viable means of assessment and accountability for the arts is not that different to where it currently stands. Labuta (1972) claimed, quite assertively, that "most teachers [just] aren't that accountable" (p.48). This is not so much an accusation as it is an observation, which is rooted in the inherent lack of accountability systems or structures formally in place for fine arts educators. I believe it is important to highlight the arts at this point, as opposed to other subjects of the core curriculum, as there are many (some would argue too many) accountability systems currently in place for the "tested subjects" (i.e. mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts) that make up the national core; while strictly fewer accountability systems exist, let alone are adequately practiced and formally recognized in the arts. I am left asking, in this historical perspective, why then has a system not been put into place? This question was posed by Labuta in 1972, and his response, again is both haunting and pertinent. Education as a whole is focused on outcome and measurable results (Labuta, 1972). Without a formalized assessment of fine arts programs in public schools, a system of accountability is lacking. In other words, without a standardized measurement of *results* within fine arts classrooms, problems cannot be identified, and "since [there] are not identified problem areas, the schools are not being held accountable" for the arts (Labuta, 1972, p.43).

Labuta (1972) advocated for the establishment of defined outcomes in music classrooms to generate standards that would ultimately be used to generate a system of accountability in the arts (specifically for music). I feel convicted to contest such advocation which calls for standardized tests to evaluate student progress in fine arts, in spite of any perceived benefits that come from initiating accountability measures such as standardized tests within American systems of education. With such a proposition in mind, however, I recognize multiple systems that have been established (and often fail) to address accountability in the arts, from my own experiences as a former secondary instrumental music teacher in the state of Texas. To clarify, I am speaking specifically from my experiences in the classroom and assuming, through sporadic conversations with colleagues around the United States, that these systems are omnipresent, under many names and structures, and all seek to satisfy issues of accountability that are systemically absent in public school fine arts instruction. This reflexive dialog on my own experiences with accountability and the disposition to change and/or establish equitable and viable systems of accountability in the arts reveals a truly unique and complicated relationship of the educator and teacher accountability which I correlate to the seminal work of Patti Lather (2012).

Artifact #2 - The Double(d) Nature of Accountability

Patti Lather, in *Getting Lost* (2012) offers a unique perspective on methodological pursuits through her deconstructive reasoning of praxis. Lather, through her work in feminist ethnography, discovered a *double(d)* methodology, rooted in Derridean logic, that presented itself as a functional paradox for evaluating and understanding her own research. I see her work as a creative solution to developing an

understanding for the rather difficult examination of accountability as a structural component of education. I suggest that the concept of *double(d)* notions and reasoning can be applied to the conundrum of educational accountability and the actions of teachers to challenge such a structure while working within it.

As described by Lather (2012) the key to double(d) logic is "the double necessity of working from *within* the institutional constraints of a tradition, even while trying to expose what that tradition has exposed or forgotten" (p. 14). Practitioners of education are being assessed by individuals that perpetuate the deficiencies recognized by their predecessors. To question *the system* is to fault its value and significance, in spite of its deficits. Teachers often find themselves constrained by the institutionalization of teaching and learning, and yet they are expected to subject themselves and their students to perceived conflict, errors, and shortcomings that their actions ultimately support and reproduce (Santoro, 2018). One of the greatest issues in the praxis of assessment and accountability of teachers in public-schools is that the professional community that exists within *the system* is essentially blind to its redundancy and stagnation. Educational policy and reform over the past 50 years, pertaining to accountability, is simply a palimpsest of failed experiments and reformulated nomenclature.

In appreciating Lather's arguments for challenging the notions of deconstruction, double(d) science, and praxis; I would suggest that teachers suffer a *double(d) accountability*. As a system of educational accountability developed from the early nineteen-seventies on in the United States, teachers have consistently found themselves at a crossroads, debating between what is *needed* and what is *desired* of educational accountability. Despite the tired and cliché complaints that educational laws and policies

are being forced upon the educational community from bureaucrats that sit in large chairs behind big desks without ever understanding the role and responsibilities of professional teachers, the reality of school policy and reform is that it is often conceived and led by professional educators themselves. More than ever, with the solicitation of journals, magazines, books, and conferences, and the expansion of government agencies and higher education programs, education has a voice whose accent comes from retired and aspiring professionals whose experiences are rooted in real classrooms and schools. So why is accountability, and the assessments and standards that support it, still suffering from a perceived lack of clarity, function, and purpose? I believe the answer is a lack of consciousness amongst educators that are perpetuating their own consternation by failing to appreciate the double(d) nature of teacher accountability.

As an example, let us consider the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), which was promoted by the Texas Education Agency and supported by law in the Texas Education Code as a system for professional development and appraisal requirements for public schools in the state of Texas between 1995 and 2016. PDAS evaluated and assessed educators based on established professional standards. Although some districts chose to alter or deviate from PDAS, the vast majority of the state of Texas used the system to assess its teachers and administrators in public schools as a part of the larger efforts to ensure accountability within the state. This was a system designed by teachers and administrators for their peers; with a so called "understanding" of public education and the needs of its stakeholders. The system, however, ultimately suffered from a *double(d) accountability* in which the authors, entrenched in convoluted systems of assessment, attempted to rewrite accountability policies while still subject to and under

the requirement of the very system they were trying to change which depended on their compliance.

Pragmatically, I would suggest that there is no *one* solution that exists to address the many aspects of accountability that are required in public education. However, I believe recognizing and struggling with the double(d) nature of accountability is a beneficial move in the direction of school reform and *conscientization* (Freire, 1970) of educators who are engaged daily in generating structures and systems of accountability through their professional actions.

I would ask, somewhat poetically: What can we learn about the road before us by moving forward while staring in the rearview mirror? Suggesting a double(d) notion of accountability is more than promoting teacher reflexivity. It is difficult to deny that many errors have been made over the years in conceptualizing and implementing policy pertaining to accountability in public schools, and it is far more complex than simply learning from one's mistakes, as educational institutions (which are truly unique to time, geography, and socio-economic environments) absorb, conform, and hemorrhage resources in attempts to solve perceived issues of accountability.

In the present study I offer an examination of accountability through the *four organizational frames* of Bolman and Deal to reconceptualize or (re)frame accountability in the context of agential structures that generate the complex system of education experienced in public schools. In essence, I engage with the double(d) notion of accountability head on, by recognizing the frustrations and pit falls of my own professional experiences as a public-school educator who inadvertently supported constructs and concepts of accountability that fueled my own frustrations within the

systems and structures I operated within. What follows is a brief introduction of the four frames to clarify their function in developing my own perspective of accountability through professional experiences as a fine arts educator in central Texas. By viewing accountability through these four frames I hope to debunk the notion that a formal, reliable, and realistic system of accountability exists for fine arts educators in the state of Texas, and to generate critical questions that yield new insight for the structural characteristics of accountability and the ultimate impact it has on teacher professional agency.

Artifact #3 - Framing Accountability

Bolman and Deal (2017) define *framing* as the construction of mental models to help one understand and negotiate particular territories. Their concept of framing is developed through four specific perspectives (or frames) that encourage a deeper understanding of an organization through the critical analysis of that organization's function and operations. Although accountability, in and of itself, is not an "organization" in a traditional sense (the ordering and governing of *persons*); I utilize the four frames as an established analytical tool in the field of organizational leadership to establish accountability as a sociological structure which is culturally conceived, defined, perceived, understood, and operated *by persons*. In stricter terms, accountability can be understood simply as a *system* (the ordering and governing of *things*, such as policies, practices, or standards). This is an important yet complicated distinction, in that accountability, although not *comprised* of persons, does operate and function agentially by supporting the structure of a system generated by the actions of people acting within that system. This folds back into the double(d) nature of accountability previously

posited and speaks directly to the phenomenological nature of accountability and similar systems within education that act as generative and delimitating structures in which agents operate.

In examining accountability in fine arts education, I believe the four frames help organize my own thoughts and experiences in such a way as to promote the need for all teachers to wrestle with the conceptualization of agentic structures in which they operate. In other words, in considering how current systems and conceptualizations of accountability, or lack thereof, are affecting fine arts teaching and learning through the four frames, we will reveal structural characteristics of accountability and the importance of agentic beliefs to author and edit those structures within the morphogenetic cycle (as detailed in chapter 2).

The four frames discussed by Bolman and Deal (2017) are based on principles and practices of organizational/systematic politics, structure, symbolism and human resource. Within the *political* frame "the question is not whether organizations are political, but what kind of politics they will encompass" (p. 208). The political frame addresses issues of power and how that power is used. The *structural* frame pertains to the regulations and subsequent governing of organizations. It addresses the rules, roles, policies, environment, and attitudes perpetuated by the organization and how all of these characteristics contribute to a unified and functional structure, whether it is advertised as such, or effectively managed. This must be distinguished from the macro-conceptualization of accountability as an *agential structure* that is suggested from the examination to follow, as opposed to a micro-conceptualization in the context of the four frames as presented by Bolman and Deal (2017) which employs the same term

(structural) to convey systematized elements within an organization. The *symbolic* frame searches for meaning in actions. It identifies the ceremonies, stories, heroes, and ritual of organizations to promote or encourage specific cultures of operation. This is related directly to the generative aspects of teacher agency to construct and support the structures of accountability in which teachers operate. Lastly, the human resource frame is designed to assess and meet needs. It discusses the skills associated with the membership of the organization and how such skills may be aligned to meet needs and empower relationships within the organization.

Again, I am broadening the concept of "organization" employed by Bolman and Deal (2017) to see beyond a body of organized persons that serve in a specific capacity (though such a definition is already strikingly similar to that of agential structures). Using the frames, accountability can be better understood as a socially constructed, complex organizational system (being made up of persons who operate within that system to support its structure). It is important to recognize, at this point, that the frames suggested by Bolman and Deal (2017) are only one possible method of analyzing organizations and their generative operation. Education itself is comprised of a tremendous number of requisite components (such as accountability) that support its structure in a sociological sense. Despite other methods of analysis that are possible, I believe the four frames serve the present study best, as a practice rooted in organizational leadership that promotes critical analysis and agentic response.

Furthermore, although accountability may be understood as an aspect of the larger organization of education; I choose to examine accountability as an institution in and of itself to expose its dense correlated components that can be translated into agential

structures *within* education. The power of our beliefs rooted in lived experience cannot be understated in the process of this work. Bolman and Deal (2017) stress the importance of "our preconceived theories, models, and images [to] determine what we see, what we do, and how we judge what we accomplish" (p. 41). I understand this as the significance of agential beliefs to promote or suppress our actions within the delineated structures we are acting in. Through the four organizational frames that follow, I illuminate such "preconceptions" through my own experiences as a secondary instrumental music teacher in central Texas, and evaluate the subsequent structure of accountability within an agential model of education in which the teacher is troubled by the double(d) notion of accountability and struggles to act agentially within that perceived structure.

The Political Frame

The use and appointment of political power within secondary music curriculum and instruction in the state of Texas is both vague and convoluted. In terms of perceived power for accountability, most (if not all) secondary music teachers would tell you the first person of authority who exercises and affects their work directly is their campus principal (this is corroborated with the survey responses referenced earlier. 102 of 114 fine arts educators claimed they were professionally accountable to their principal/administrator). This immediately impacts the educator's sense of agency, in which their supervisor has the perceived authority to relegate their actions under the auspices of accountability. Power (from an agential and organizational perspective) is immediately restricted for the teacher and promoted for the administrators that are responsible for ensuring teaching and learning standards. This political dynamic of educational administration and their power to perform assessment and ensure

accountability is by no means restricted to the fine arts. However, the interaction of the secondary music teacher and principal is quite different than that of a classroom teacher or even a department chair in one of the state-tested academic subjects (math, science, English and social studies).

Interestingly, viewed through the political lens, secondary music teachers are, (with rare exception) under the same standard teacher contract as all other teachers on campus. This means, in terms of professional politics, they have the same responsibilities and power. The accountability systems, however, and the power that exists within them are quite different. Every teacher in public school is expected to perform in a specific role and is subject to the political power and responsibility associated with the position of being *just* a classroom teacher, as it relates to grades, attendance, assigned campus duties, discipline, et cetera. The reality for secondary music teachers (and other performing arts teachers for that matter), is much more complicated.

The secondary music teacher is not *simply* a classroom teacher, they are a program director. They are expected to plan trips, organize extracurricular rehearsals, performances, and competitions, take inventory, and repair and order instruments, literature, classroom supplies, and instructional materials; just to name a few additional responsibilities and expectations that fall under the nebulous "and other duties as assigned" phrase which is included in most teacher contracts.

To complicate matters further, more often than not, they do this alone in terms of political structures and support within their schools. That is, most subjects taught in public schools, particularly those affiliated with standardized testing, have multiple faculty teaching the same courses and therefore operate within a shared structure of

power and responsibility often designated by departments or teams. Generally speaking, there is a department chair or lead teacher that oversees most administrative duties for a particular cohort of faculty (such as ordering necessary supplies and collecting, reporting, and reviewing data) and the rest of the department works together to collaborate and hold each other accountable to established standards and goals. Within fine arts, however, the different disciplines are often siloed into their content specialty (dance, theater, music, visual arts, et cetera) with each independently serving their own unique and specialized needs. This means the responsibilities, standards, and distribution of power are realized and perceived quite differently than non-art teachers.

One would assume that these fine art teachers have a strong sense of authority and perceived political power since they are essentially expected to run and operate their program autonomously. After all, as specialists in their field they alone hold the required expertise to accomplish such tasks as delineated above. That is, the choir director would not necessarily be capable of organizing and teaching the visual arts program and vice versa because of the specialized standards, pedagogy, and requirements of each discipline and program. Yet, as observed and experienced within my own career as a secondary instrumental music instructor, equitable, valid measures of accountability are absent to ensure that such power and authority are exercised appropriately. On one hand, a lack of accountability and/or formal assessment can suggest a greater sense of autonomy. But it can also convey uncertainty by not affirming expectations and engaging in meaningful assessment to support established standards within a valid, functional system of accountability.

The administrators that oversee secondary instrumental teachers are rarely qualified to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, in terms of their content knowledge in the associated discipline, or their understanding of the unique pedagogical practices utilized within a music classroom. Nor do they inquire of the details associated with running the program i.e. uniforms, instruments, travel, et cetera to establish a more concrete, and arguably sympathetic understanding of what the music teacher is expected to do. Some districts employ a fine arts director, coordinator, or lead teacher, to battle the obvious deficit in content knowledge, but for most teachers, accountability is simply based on the appropriate paperwork being turned in at the required time and established goals, such as test scores and student performance, being satisfied within a prescribed timeline. Senechal (2013) points out that "accountability, in its worst form, is the mandated practice of answering to people who don't understand what we are doing" (p. 5). She continues, "The danger of the accountability movement lies in its insistence on the generic, literal, and flat, its dismissal of the subtlety and particularity of subject matter" (p. 6).

In the broader context of school accountability, administrators, to whom most fine arts teachers feel they are accountable to, are often considered *data hungry*. Perpetuating a system that is constructed by and depends on data from standardized assessments. The irony is that most administrators are simply holding teachers accountable to similar systems and models in which they are subject to accountability. These *outcomes-based models* which negatively impact subjects such as the fine arts (Labuta, 1972) have focused on data-driven assessment and accountability since the mid 1980's. But as more and more of the curriculum is developed with *results* in mind, the data moves into the

driver's seat and measurable outcomes become the only destination in sight. Senechal (2013) states that "any 'evidence' we provide, any 'data' we collect any 'effectiveness' we demonstrate, has meaning only in relation to our existing educational goals, which depend on our conception of education and of the subject matter itself" (p. 7).

Beyond the scope of the campus and district expectations, however, each secondary music instructor is expected to coordinate various instructional activities with regional and state music organizations, further adding to their perceived political power and authority, yet undermined or underappreciated by the political structures in place within their campus and/or district. A list of some of the organizations, roles, and their affiliate activities, services and/or curricular expectations related to secondary instrumental instruction in the state of Texas are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Professional expectations and responsibilities

Organization/Individual	Activities/Services/Curricular Expectations
Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA)	Region and All-State auditions and ensembles and PD
University Interscholastic League (UIL)	Solo & Ensemble and Concert and Sight-Reading activities
Music Educators National Conference (MENC)	National curricular standards and advocacy
Texas Music Educators Conference (TMEC)	State affiliate to MENC
Texas Educators Agency (TEA)	State curricular standards "TEKS"
Center for Educator Development in the Fine Arts (CEDFA)	Promotes the use of TEKS in instruction through PD
Clinicians	Pre-UIL adjudication
Technicians, assistants and instructors	Supplementary staff and instructional coaches

Of course, Table 1 represents only a small sampling of what a secondary music teacher can expect to interact with during their tenure in a Texas public school, and I would be remiss to not recognize that most teachers regardless of their content specialty

are engaged in professional organizations outside of their school. The distinction, however, is the requirement of secondary music teachers to be involved with the organizations and activities listed in Table 1in order to uphold the projected systems of accountability in which they operate. Although the exact combination and interaction of the entities listed in Table 1 and the music teacher associated with them may vary widely across the state, and even within some districts, the list does provide a glimpse of the affiliate organizations that public school secondary music instructors are expected to navigate and work within to establish and operate a "successful program," in which success is often defined by the affiliate organizations, as opposed to the teacher operating within them, yielding another loss of power within a purely political structure of professional accountability.

It is important to note that "success" in this context may be defined in radically different ways across the state and even within some districts and campuses, since there are no published standards to assess the professional expectations listed in Table 1, and no *formal* system of accountability to ensure that the expectations are met. Amongst peers and colleagues, however, political pressures are manifested through professional and social engagement with other music educators.

Many Texas music educators and administrators would argue that the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Concert and Sight-Reading Contest and the UIL Solo and Ensemble contests are standards-based activities that represent an assessment or evaluation of music programs and individual students within that program which can be utilized to establish a system of accountability, and subsequently a political structure in which to operate. The reality, however, is that UIL is an independent organization,

outside of the purview of the Texas Education Agency, and therefore has no formal authority to generate assessments of music teachers and their programs within public schools, nor is it required to adhere to state-approved or sanctioned curricular standards. To clarify, I am not bringing the performance and judging criteria of UIL music activities into question. Rather, I am recognizing that the perceived political power and authority of UIL to assess public school music teachers and their programs is falsely assumed by most if not all Texas music educators and public-school administrators (this claim is supported by the qualitative data discussed previously).

Furthermore, the notion that UIL acts as a formal assessment of music programs in the state of Texas, which most Texas music educators operate under, supports misguided attention on student achievement and assessment through performance, an *outcomes-based model* of accountability (Labuta, 1972), which neglects vital strands of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) designed to appreciate models and assessments of growth through musical instruction. This speaks directly to the data-driven assessment and accountability mentioned previously, reducing our students' learning to a standardized score, which does not represent the progress and development of the students, nor does it evaluate all of their knowledge and/or skills required by educational policy, standards, and law within designated subjects.

Viewing accountability through the political lens, a confused model of assessment and accountability is established amongst music educators through perceptions of power and authority perpetuated from their actions (though well intentioned and ill-informed) as well as inappropriate measures of success that are often repudiated by unknowing supervisors. The images of accountability conveyed through the political frame attempt to

dispel the myths and false practices surrounding the perceived power and authority of music teachers, however, this exhibition is by no means exhaustive. It is my hope that the perspectives addressed here act as a catalyst for a growing conversation on perceived political power within systems of accountability that secondary music teachers operate within. The importance of the *double(d) nature* of accountability present in the current environment of secondary music instruction cannot be understated. As a former secondary instrumental music teacher, it is increasingly difficult to question well-established systems while being required to meet the flawed expectations of that same system. My own acquiescence only further supported the established system and entrenched its supporters who seek to protect the system from fear of losing it.

The Structural Frame

The power and authority exercised within an organization is heavily dependent on its established structures, especially when such structures are rigid and not easily redefined. When considering the structure of public-school arts education, particularly associated with secondary instrumental instruction, one must recognize the limitations that structures of accountability (as they are currently understood and practiced) impose on the function and operation of arts programs. I will offer my own personal and professional experiences as a former secondary music instructor in public schools to support my understanding of accountability through the structural frame.

First, as mentioned in the political frame, the structure of individual arts programs is subject to the standardized structures and requirements of Texas public schools, as dictated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Exactly how far up the administrative ladder one most travel to locate the pinnacle of authority is somewhat irrelevant, as the

further one travels from the classroom, the less likely they are to see any effective measures of accountability, particularly for the fine arts.

Let us start our exploration of the structures of accountability at state level with arguably the highest position of administrative accountability for Texas schools, the office of the Commissioner of Education, who serves as the head of TEA. We can follow strains of accountability through the hierarchical structure of TEA into various offices delegated and formulated to support education in the state of Texas from the top down. We can locate the department that oversees standards and programs, which oversees a department of curriculum, which houses a program coordinator over all enrichment education in the state of Texas, which includes Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Health Education, Languages other than English, Physical Education, and Technology Applications. Each of these disciplines, subjects, and fields have an individual page on the TEA website. Under the fine arts page the following description is given for the function of the fine arts division of enrichment education:

> The Curriculum Standards and Students Support Division of the TEA provides direction and leadership for the state's public school art, dance, music, and theatre programs for Kindergarten through grade 12. The division's staff facilitate various fine arts statewide initiatives, including implementation of the fine arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and assistance to the TEA Division of Instructional Materials for the adoption process for fine arts instructional materials (TEA, 2020, para. 1).

As a practicing fine arts educator, I have never personally interacted with TEA, nor have I received direction, leadership, or support in facilitating or implementing any of the TEKS or program directives. The reality is, no one is currently tasked with monitoring and supporting the fine arts curriculum at TEA, because there is not a formal state wide assessment of the fine arts in the state of Texas, and is therefore no way to

formally measure and/or hold fine arts programs accountable for what and how they are teaching. Again, I feel it is important and appropriate to state that this is not meant to be accusatory. Many districts have developed and implemented their own systems of accountability to ensure that the TEKS are being addressed adequately, and TEA does maintain staff that are prescribed to work specifically with fine arts educators among other things. In spite of this, however, the fact remains that there is not an adequate structure for a formal statewide accountability system for fine arts education in the state of Texas.

In 1998, when the new standards of public education "Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills" (TEKS) were approved by the Texas legislature, TEA developed Centers for Educator Development (CEDs) to support and facilitate the implementation of the new standards within districts across the state. The idea of educational standards promoted accountability and TEA was prepared to support the districts as the new standards were implemented. A CED was created for all of the subjects that had TEKS, including the fine arts. After funding had been exhausted the Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts (CEDFA) became a non-profit organization to continue supporting fine arts educators in the implementation of state standards. Originally an extension of TEA, CEDFA still exists as a supporting organization of fine arts instruction, however, involvement and engagement in CEDFA is completely voluntary, and there are no accountability measures or authority given to CEDFA in supporting TEKS implementation for fine arts in public schools. This is not to imply that CEDFA exists without a purpose or function, but it is an example of structural elements within fine arts

education that exercise perceived authority yet do not actually have the ability to hold teachers accountable for their work.

Still viewing structures at the state level, another organization widely credited and utilized by fine arts educators as a tool for assessment and accountability is the University Interscholastic League (UIL) referenced previously. UIL was established in 1910 by the University of Texas to provide educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests to eligible public-school students within the state of Texas. Although UIL has established standards of performance for its music activities, that are arguably supportive of the TEKS, there is no legal authority of UIL to assess and evaluate the value or success of public-school music programs. Many music educators operate under the assumption that their success in UIL activities correlates to their success as a fine arts educator and that it has a place in their own evaluation as a teacher. But again, this is an unfounded belief based solely on misconceptions. It is unfortunate that so many music teachers ascribe to this particular structure of perceived accountability as it echoes the frustration of many other educators outside of the arts who suffer standardized tests that dictate the success of their students and their teaching with a score captured at a single moment in the process of learning (this will be discussed further when considering accountability in fine arts through the symbolic and human resource frames).

Navigating further down from the state level to the district and instructional level, many districts employ a fine arts coordinator, director, or lead teacher to help facilitate the arts. This is one of the most effective ways to encourage and reinforce accountability for the fine arts in public-schools. Unfortunately, without accountability measures established above these local positions, there are no formal assessment tools for these fine

arts administrators, and the quality and effectiveness of their positions vary dramatically across the state. The challenge then becomes ensuring equity for all of the fine arts teachers and their administrators in hopes that it will *trickle down* to the teachers. Since there is not a fine arts administrator certification, nor is it realistic to assume that one individual would have K-12 teaching experience and content knowledge in all of the fine arts disciplines, more often than not fine arts administrators are hired with a narrow perspective on the arts. This is not to insinuate that a retired music teacher or any former fine arts teacher cannot reasonably manage and support a different program than their professional background dictates. For that matter, we would expect high school principals to be certified in every academic discipline on their campus. It does however pose a serious problem for the structure of accountability fine arts administrators exercise. If they only have experience in one fine arts content area, and without a state structure with standards for what a fine arts administrator should be responsible for, the inconsistencies are not only apparent, but responsible for generating a sub-culture of educational administration, further complicating the administrative structure and understanding of accountability.

Thus, from the state to the local level, there is a lack of structured, formal, standardized, equitable accountability for fine arts teachers in public schools. Although some districts have developed their own systems of accountability for fine arts educators, the structures currently in place restrict effective conversations from the top down and the bottom up. In spite of successful fine arts management and accountability at the district level, there is no one at TEA to support and recognize such success. Likewise, although TEA has designated staff to support the implementation of the fine arts TEKS and the

acquisition of fine arts instructional materials; this information is inconsistently communicated at the local level. The structures that are in place are operating under assumed precedence perpetuated by inherited traditions rather than coherent responsive policy.

The Symbolic Frame

Symbolically, the notion of accountability in music has been poisoned by competition. Success has turned into a trophy, a score, or a medal. Systemically, the curriculum of public-school music programs has been designed around competitive festivals, activities, and events that compare our students and their programs to others, rather than evaluating progress of the individual student against established standards and rubrics associated with the campus, district, and state.

As an example, a typical secondary school music calendar in the state of Texas may begin the academic year with preparation for region auditions (a competitive ranking of auditioned students within specific regions aligned by the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA)) which can, and do in many cases (particularly in the choral world), dictate the repertoire of the fall concert, and thus dictate the instructional materials of the first 9 weeks of school. Most of the students have had this music since the summer and have been working on it diligently for months. Needless to say, the value of this music is limited in the scope of what students should be accomplishing in the classroom according to the TEKS. To clarify, programs can and do benefit from region music and the subsequent music preparation of the students, but the benefit of such work and repertoire is seldom articulated and effectively communicated with administrators and stakeholders discussed in the political and structural frames. Furthermore, the repertoire is selected by

a committee of educators appointed within TMEA, who oversee the region audition process.

This implicates the double(d) nature of accountability discussed earlier, specifically for Texas music teachers that are perpetuating the very systems they criticize while upholding the same systems by participating and acting from within them. I often engaged in frustrated conversations with colleagues at region auditions, where the repertoire selection, audition process, adjudication, and results were being criticized. As mentioned before, this repertoire was selected by a panel of colleagues. In spite of what may seem like an appropriate structure for such an important curricular decision, it fails to ensure an equitable experience for *all* students and educators across the state. The repertoire becomes a symbol of what music students "should" be capable of, and subsequently what music teachers "should" be teaching. These types of unilateral curricular decisions are fraught with inequities and often fail to appreciate growth models of learning, replacing them with "winner take all" or high-stakes outcome-based assessments (in music, this can be understood as the audition process). The number of students one has accepted to the region clinic and concert then becomes a symbol of "success" for the music teacher and their campus/program. This is supported through the politics and structures of the professional organization (TMEA) that is responsible for organizing and facilitating the event to begin with. Again, the double(d) accountability is manifested by the educators within the system who struggle with the symbolic "success" of competition in fine arts education and who are simultaneously upholding the entire system with their participation. Their participation, of course, is connected to their

aforementioned political and structural understandings of accountability preserved by a unique culture of fine arts education in the state of Texas.

After completing the region auditions, which take place anywhere from late September to early October, students that have "advanced" will begin preparing the repertoire for state or area auditions. This is usually restricted to a smaller population of students and therefore has less of an impact on classroom instruction. October, however, begins UIL marching band competitions and fall festivals, which usually include some form of competition or adjudication. November is filled with the concerts which celebrate the "winners" of region auditions and more auditions to advance to the state level. Christmas and winter concerts, which for the most part avoid a competitive component, bring the fall semester to a close, but not without preparation for the next contest.

The spring semester will begin or in most cases continue preparation for the Solo and Ensemble contest facilitated by UIL. Students traditionally select their Solo and Ensemble repertoire in the late fall, right after region concerts and before Christmas. UIL solo and ensemble contests take place between January and February and evaluate individual students and again offer opportunities to advance from the region to the state level. By February, the results of the TMEA state auditions have generated the All-State music ensembles at the annual TMEA convention in San Antonio. In both cases, students are not the only one's subject to comparison and assessment. The conversations amongst directors, administrators, and parents include inquiries into the number of students that participated in Region and All-State, how many superior ratings were received at Solo and Ensemble, and how many students will be advancing to the state solo and ensemble contest (all quantifiable assessments of perceived success). March and April, referred to

as “Contest Season,” are the months designated for UIL’s Concert and Sight Reading (C&SR) events. These events have symbolically become *the* annual measure of success for public school music programs in the state of Texas. The expressed goal is to receive a “superior rating” (the highest possible score awarded) from both the concert and sight-reading panels of judges. The rubric for the evaluations is inconsistent among the three music disciplines (band, choir, and orchestra) as well as the process for hiring and certifying the judges. Each C&SR event is dramatically different in terms of its quality and standards. This is not to suggest that UIL condones such inconsistencies, but the fact remains that a formal standard of adjudication and the hiring of judges does not exist equitably among all three music disciplines.

Several colloquial terms have been created to express the results of a program’s C&SR experience which profoundly affect the identity of the programs, their directors, and their students. If an ensemble receives “straight 1’s” (meaning all six judges gave them superior ratings in both concert and sight-reading portions of the event) the ensemble that performed (as there are usually multiple ensembles representing a single program/campus) are said to have earned “sweepstakes.” If you receive a mean score of a 1, which would happen if two of the three judges gave you a 1 and the third gave you a 2, you are said to have received a “dirty sweepstakes.” If the panel of judges gave you a 1, 2, and 3 in the concert or sight-reading portion of the event you are said to have received a “rainbow.” It is important to note that a superior rating in only one portion of the event, either concert or sight-reading, does not result in sweepstakes. In that case one may report that they received a “1 on stage” (which again reflects a mean score) and a “2 in sight-reading.”

The true atrocity of this event is that some educators begin the preparation of this music in the fall semester drastically limiting the students musical and instructional experience. The goal of the music course then becomes a score rather than the musical development of the students. This is, without question, the equivalent criticism of other courses who are accused of "teaching to the test." For the music disciplines, I would offer the modified phrase "teaching to the contest."

After UIL C&SR events, most programs experience their one respite of the year in preparation of their spring concerts. However, State Solo and Ensemble takes place in May, the same month that music is released for region auditions for the upcoming year. The cycle begins again without rest. The entire year has thus been dominated by competition. Curriculum and instruction are then realized through competition, and success is understood through competitive rankings and results rather than educational growth and achievement.

It would be irresponsible of me to suggest that every secondary music program in the state of Texas adheres to the calendar outlined above. As many music educators are currently employed in the state, so you will find an equal number of opinions and beliefs of how music programs should be structured and facilitated and how success in those programs is defined and celebrated. Every music teacher in the state, however, is affected by these competitions. Whether they choose to participate in them or not, the symbolism of their results and the so-called "success" associated with them cannot be avoided. In conversation with one of my colleagues in band over our participation in UIL contests, I suggested, quite vehemently, that the perceived rewards did not justify the cost, and that my program and my students would benefit more from alternative instruction and

performances. The “alternative” was anything other than UIL, in spite of the assumption that UIL represents the anticipated and professionally expected standard of public-school enrichment programs. His response was haunting. He explained, “I used to think that way, too. But the year I told one of my clinicians that I was thinking of not going to UIL he exclaimed, ‘You can’t do that.’ When I asked him, ‘Why not?’ his response was simply, ‘Because it’s UIL!’”.

The question then becomes, who is responsible for the educational standards of our public-school music students? Is it controlled by state curricular standards approved and solicited by TEA, or is it relegated to events filled with assigned “experts” that criticize your attempts at “success” once a year during one performance of a finite and restricted number of materials? I find it disheartening that the later bears a striking resemblance to the description of standardized tests and carries an equal disservice to the education of students in public schools.

Symbolically, accountability in the arts, particularly music in the state of Texas, has been translated to competitive results. There are strong, perceivably unchangeable traditions that have been bred into our public-school music programs to not only *promote* but *require* competition to evaluate our student’s success. It would seem as though the arts are suffering Goodhart’s law, for when the measure becomes the target, it ceases to be a good measure.

The Human Resource Frame

The greatest question of this investigation lies in the exploration of accountability in fine arts through the human resource frame. I believe there is an adverse relationship between the accountability issues of fine arts education and teachers’ professional

agency. The human resource frame challenges us to view organizations by the needs of its members and how such needs are met (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Needs can be understood pragmatically as resource oriented. Most fine arts educators tend to focus on needs related to recruitment and retention (or enrollment numbers), facilities, teaching materials, budgets, et cetera. Ideally, however, the identification of such needs and resources and the subsequent fulfillment of those needs would be addressed in the structural and political framework of educational institutions. I believe it is important to distinguish these *pragmatic needs*, which are satisfied by institutional infrastructures, from the *personal needs*, that can only be satisfied through the educational relationships of teachers and students themselves. External (rather than intrinsic) factors, such as a lack of resources or the inability to satisfy pragmatic needs, do generate deficits in perceived capacities to succeed, which can be expressed as teacher and student agency. But a fundamental lack of formal accountability systematically affects one's capacity to succeed by distorting or neglecting the assessment and establishment of standards which define our understanding of achievement.

Without established systems of accountability, we lack the structures necessary to understand assessment and evaluation. Without a mode of effectively evaluating our actions and their effects, we are usually reticent to establish a definition of success. Without a clear definition of success, we struggle to understand the significance of our learning and its application in the process of improvement. I would argue, without a system of accountability, there is nothing to engage us in the process of growth and development. We are therefore stagnant, and without education. Horsley (2009) discusses various definitions of accountability and how it is manifested in public school education

for music teachers. Specifically, he addresses the dilemma of understanding accountability as *answerability*, and issues of top-down versus bottom-up policy making. Within this conversation the point is made that accountability is a key component to teacher agency. We must avoid neo-liberal models that strip teachers of their intrinsic capacities to teach, but we must also ensure a system that will require educators to know what they are doing, and more importantly how they are doing it with the expressed desire to educate students.

The questions remain: if a fine arts teacher is doing a great job, how do they know and how is it celebrated? Conversely, if a fine arts teacher is doing a very poor job, how do they know and how do they address improvement? It is unfair to assume the worst or best of any educator, as such assumptions can ultimately affect the students more than anyone else. Accountability should not be unrecognizable to fine arts educators. Quite the contrary, it should be an expectation that is met with sincerity and diligence in ensuring that all students have equitable access to their education in the arts. Accountability is not, as it is viewed by most administrators and members of the public, a way of keeping teachers in line. Rather, it is a vital aspect to developing teacher agency and identity.

In this context, accountability is ultimately a way of identifying needs. Again, I am pushing beyond a pragmatic conception of needs within public school music programs. I am looking towards the intrinsic benefits that come from the process of accountability. A process that both generates and supports the establishment of standards, systems of assessment, tools for measurement, and instills the desire to satisfy these components in an effort to remain accountable. None of this is recognized, of course, without a consciousness of one's agency in the process. Without the knowledge of one's

impact on the environment they are acting in, the environment ceases to exist and the motivation to act is reduced to habitus (Archer, 1995).

Accountability (Re)framed

Having discussed accountability from a broad perspective in American public education to a narrower more nuanced perspective of secondary instrumental music instruction in Texas public-schools, I hope you can appreciate the systemic issues that misguided and misappropriated accountability measures continue to generate for fine arts administrators, teachers, and students alike. These issues stem from poorly constructed definitions of assessment and accountability that lack appropriate support and authority within the public school system, and which are perpetuated by unknowing educators operating within the same system they are suffering.

By offering my own experiences as a fine arts educator in the state of Texas through the four organizational frames of Bolman and Deal (2017) a more objective view of accountability for fine arts teachers can be projected which further dispels the myths and assumptions perpetuated by assumed and misunderstood practices of accountability within the arts.

The political frame shows the confusion of perceived power and authority of accountability within the arts. The expectations are confronted by practice, as fine arts teachers and administrators are hired into positions that lack fundamental support through established policy and infrastructure. The absence of such support denigrates fine arts educators for what is misunderstood as a lack of accountability when no true system of accountability can be named in the first place.

The structural frame further supports the misconceptions of authority and power of institutions and organizations that both advertise and exercise so called accountability measures without critical reflection or equity amongst the fine arts disciplines. Precedent proves to be the strongest validation for the perpetuated assumptions of educators who are ignorant to the misconceptualized accountability they are subjected to.

The symbolic frame exposes the "outcome-based models" that currently dominate accountability in fine arts and are manifested through competition. It is a terrifying to recognize the parallel of teaching content for standardized tests and teaching the arts for standardized performances, which both yield an abstracted and isolated score to communicate success which is removed from the context of instructional practice and which ultimately fails to adequately address state standards of essential knowledge and skills.

The human resource frame questions the concept of needs and how they are met for both fine arts teachers and students within the process of accountability. A lack of accountability invites a lack of standards, which ultimately affects both the quality of teaching and the students' experiences and perceived success. Although I would not suggest that every fine arts teacher exploits this lack of accountability, I do argue that the absence of accountability questions the purpose of education and places an unrealistic expectation on fine arts educators to create, define, implement, evaluate and communicate their own standards without appropriate and necessary feedback and affirmation.

Based on this framing of accountability, viewed from the perspective of my own experiences as a secondary music instructor, I do not believe there is a sincere, equitable,

and sustainable form of accountability for fine arts educators at any level in the state of Texas. At present, I do not have satisfactory solutions or answers to the problems exposed in what proves to be a dense, evolving, and complicated issue. But I would contend that answers are *not* what is ultimately needed. I have, in the process of (re)framing accountability, developed many questions, which should invite others to critique and problematize accountability as a structural aspect of education. The ultimate goal of which, is to encourage purposeful and meaningful dialog that promotes change and encourages action from conscious teachers who can position themselves within the generative structures of their agential professional identities.

CHAPTER V

PREPARING THE NARRATIVES

> The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world.
>
> —Maxine Greene

This chapter serves as a more personal introduction to my thinking about teaching, the arts, and education leading up to the events detailed in the artifacts and narratives of chapter six. The goal of this chapter is to connect with you, as the reader, and share how I have come to understand myself as an educator and a learner. As you read my thoughts, I challenge you to think deeply about your own experiences and understanding of your place in education. As previously stated throughout this document, I believe the practice of reflexivity is vital to the promotion of agency amongst educators and students. The following artifacts serve as examples of how I have practiced reflexivity in my own life and career.

The artifacts and experiences that I am sharing with you come from, what I have most recently realized, was a crucial moment in my continued education of self. The first artifact is a short video autoethnography produced in the summer of 2015 at the end of my first year in the School Improvement program at Texas State University. The second artifact is taken, intentionally, from the end of my academic journey in the PhD program. I have included two excerpts from my comprehensive exams completed in the fall of 2017, in which I address my identity as both "artist and teacher" as well as my understanding of "education versus schooling." The last artifact is taken from my academic work in the philosophy department at Texas State University in the summer of 2017 while completing my Graduate Certificate in Professional Ethics. In these philosophical writings I address the value of *Universal Teaching* in education, as

referenced in the work of Jacques Rancière (1991), and what I came to refer to as the *Inauthenticity* of teaching, as referenced in the work of Jean Paul Sartre (1943). I share these writings to offer you, as the reader, a better perspective of what and how I was thinking about teaching and education in my last two years working in public school, which is where I subsequently experienced the greatest challenge to my sense of professional agency, and where the autoethnographic artifacts of chapter six begin.

Artifact #4 - The Beginning of My Autoethnographic Journey

I initially entered the School Improvement program in the fall of 2014 with an earnest desire to learn more about education, particularly in public schools, and with an expressed desire to transform practices and policies for fine arts education in the state of Texas. This is reflected in the initial research I was doing during my first two years in the program on accountability for fine arts teachers which is partially referenced in chapter 5.

A part of identifying that initial research topic on accountability was an intense examination of my own role as an educator, and at the time, a new doctoral student in education. Little did I know, somewhat fortuitously, that my initial examination of who I had been, who I was, and who I wanted to become would be challenged and actualized at the end of my first year of study in the summer of 2105 through an *Interpretive Autoethnography* as detailed by Norman Denzin in his book under the same title (2014). I, as well as the colleagues in my cohort, used Denzin's text to guide our individual autoethnographic inquiries and to develop more complex and nuanced understandings of ourselves.

Initially, I took a deliberately objective approach to the project to better understand *myself* through the perspectives and opinions of those around me. To do this, I

developed an anonymous survey which I shared on social media and with my colleagues where I was then teaching. The delivery of the surveys and collection of data was facilitated using Survey Monkey. The survey consisted of the following questions:

1. How long have you known Christopher, and in what capacity?
2. If you had to describe Christopher in one word, what would it be?
3. If you could change or alter one thing about Christopher or your relationship with him, what would it be?
4. Why do you believe Christopher is a public school teacher?
5. Why do you believe Christopher is pursuing a PhD?
6. What is your strongest memory of Christopher?
7. What do you believe Christopher would be doing if he was NOT a public school teacher?

I received a total of 67 responses from the survey, a roughly 5-10% return from the solicited population. The results of the survey offered important insight into how I would come to understood myself, through my actions and motivations, in contrast to what others thought of me through their own observations of and experiences with me. From the survey responses I established three characteristics/themes of my identity as an educator and a learner:

1. I care about others.
2. I am never satisfied.
3. I want to impact the world.

These three characteristics each represent complex dualities of my personality that I both celebrate and struggle with, and which reflect the internal dialectic created between myself and the opinion of others as evidenced by the data collected from the survey.

To clarify, by stating that “I care about others” I am not only recognizing the empathy and compassion I have for others, but my neurotic and obsessive self-doubt and fear in how people perceive me and how I process their opinions of me. Knowing that “I am never satisfied” conflicts with the satisfaction I gain from achieving tasks and goals.

Subsequently, it drives me to accomplish more, which is often socially and professionally celebrated, but which leaves me in a perpetual sense of longing to do more than what I have already done. Wanting to "impact the world" can be viewed as both pious and egotistical. I find it difficult to be engaged in a project or conversation without knowing that my presence and/or engagement is impacting the situation positively. In spite of the apparent conflicts, however, I do not sense turmoil or unrest in these dualities. Rather, I see them as a necessary and vital aspect of growth. The conflicts and incongruities invite criticism and a cycle of introspection that I have come to appreciate and depend on and identify as reflexivity. For me, each of these characteristics reflect Freire's concept of *unfinishedness* (1998) and propel me further into the never-ending journey of growth *through* critical reflection.

In an effort to both synthesize the data collected from the survey and to make a more personal connection to the process of *interpretive autoethnography* (Denzin, 2014) I chose to interview four people that represented extremes of my personal and professional identity. I utilize the audio from these interviews in the video autoethnography linked below. I chose to interview my mother, my wife, one of my current students (in 2015) and one of my colleagues (a fellow orchestra director working in the same district in 2015). The interviews expose a *biographical illusion* that helped me recognize myself as a "cultural creation" (Denzin, 2014, p.43). As so intricately articulated by Margaret Archer (1982) in her theory of *morphogenesis*, the interviews reveal the process of discovering experiences and perspectives of others that I construct with my actions and that I am ultimately shaped by, within social and cultural structures across time.

Leaning on my musical understanding of the world, analogously I see myself as both the composer and performer of my life, having written the notes that define the musical work others hear, but subject to the interpretation of both the performers on stage and the listeners in the audience. As a great ontological debate unfolds, I ask… what is music? Is it the notes on the page? Is it the sounds coming from the performer? Is it the intent of the performer to perform the notes? Is it in the mind's ear of the listener and their rich interpretation of the sounds they digest? So I look longingly into my own life… who am I? Am I the collection of experiences I choose to remember and embrace as defining elements of my existence? Am I the product of my personal and professional pursuits? Or am I defined by those that engage with me and validate my existence through their recognition? I would not suggest that I have answered any or all of these questions, but I humbly submit the significance of being awakened to their importance in understanding who we were, who we are, and who we hope to be. It is the consciousness of these ontological questions, and their importance in establishing the authenticity of our existence that I desire to promote through reflexivity, autoethnography, and agentic dialog utilized throughout this study.

(Please watch the following video before continuing to the next section)

https://youtu.be/YanYnuRFo0o

Artifact #5 - Discovering "I" as Artist and Teacher

I have been asked on numerous occasions in multiple contexts why I chose to be a teacher of the arts in public schools. Earnestly, I respond, "to change the world." This sentiment is taken, unabashedly, from the magnanimous work of the late Maxine Greene. Initially, as an *artist-teacher* I struggled to find myself in the world of compensatory

education and strove to create and realize initiatives of school improvement that appreciated me as both an artist and a teacher. I can admit now that I was blinded in my search for purpose, function, and meaning of the arts in education with an unconscious agenda to validate the anger and resentment I held from past experiences in public-school education, both as a graduate of Texas public schools and as a former educator within them.

I was required to be a *teacher-artist*, distinct from the later in its mode of responsibilities and obligations to systems of education and schooling. In other words, I am expected to be a *teacher* first. This confused me, as my passion for teaching was fueled by my experiences as an artist, and I assumed my identity as an artist would come first like the titles bestowed upon my colleagues which traditionally situates the subject one teaches as a precursor to the formal role one serves as an educator e.g. math teacher, science teacher, music teacher, art teacher, et cetera.

As I embarked, rather early in my career, on a seemingly endless journey to satisfy these questions and concerns, I was both comforted and offered direction by Greene's *Texts and Margins* published 1991. I found in her writing my primal desire to substantiate and justify the arts as a fundamental aspect of education. Greene proclaimed:

> I do not see how we can educate young persons if we do not enable them on some level to open spaces for themselves-spaces for communicating across the boundaries, for choosing, for becoming different in the midst of intersubjective relationships. That is one of the reasons I would argue for aware engagements with the arts for everyone, so that-in this democracy-human beings will be less likely to confine themselves to the main text, to coincide forever with what they are (p. 28).

Her words galvanized my academic curiosity and I was all at once swept up by the passion and conviction of her voice as a teacher and artist. I had struggled for years to

communicate my own beliefs on the value of art in education to school administrators without being labeled an idealistic zealot. Greene's work, however, introduced me to the field of aesthetic education and the countless programs, projects, research, and literature that existed to improve education through the arts in a way that was both logical and welcoming to the possibilities that exist through creativity and imagination.

In spite of my doubts and personal skepticism, I discovered from my research a history, centuries old, of arts as a vital and integral part of education and the cultivation of society (Nash, 2013; Wakeford, 2004). What had clearly changed, however, and presented itself as the greatest challenge to a modern fully integrated arts education, was the seemingly endless search to *justify* the arts within public school curriculum. Rabkin (2004) argues that "arts education [will] remain on the margin of educational policy until, and unless, reformers and policymakers… [are] convinced it [can] contribute to changing the norm of student failure that characterize[s] so many schools and districts" (p. 7). This is a troubling notion considering the double standard it represents for the arts in comparison to other subjects i.e. English, science, history, and math.

In contrast to the place the arts occupy in education, no one is questioning the importance of math based on its perceived value and benefit to other subjects (Rabkin, p. 133). Such a justification would seem unnecessary and preposterous in context to established standards and requirements of learning. This is not to say that math cannot be utilized outside of the math classroom, but we certainly do not justify its existence based on the benefits it may offer other disciplines. Fowler (2001) contends "when school boards eliminate or shrink their arts programs, they do so on the basis of a hierarchy of subject matters… Accordingly, they rate the arts as having low priority in relation to

what they believe are a higher order of essentials" (p. 31). I know first-hand that this perception is reflected, not only in the world of curriculum, but in professional standards of assessment and accountability as well.

This hierarchy perpetuates an inequality in education of subjects that is usually imposed upon systems of learning by those outside the interest of learners. That is to say, educational policymakers, in promoting select subjects over others, whether it is through increased funding, staffing, or curriculum writing, are projecting an inauthentic importance to those subjects. Although such decisions may be justified as being in the best interest of the society and the future prospects of learners; a system of stultification is generated that removes both teachers and students from a genuine educational experience. For example, when an elementary school teacher is instructed to focus on a particular unit pertaining to science and engineering from campus administrators, who have received the directive from district administrators, who are following an initiative of state education agencies, who are anticipating or responding to national trends in education, which are responding to international moves in education, any sense of intellectual agency has been completely lost! What has been described is a political structure that dominants education from the top down. We are forced, at this point, to question the function of education. Is the goal to prescribe learning for predicted outcomes? Where is the learner in this process? Whom do the policies being enacted benefit? Answers to these questions unfortunately lead to a system of education that has strategically dismantled education and replaced it with schooling, training students to fulfill mundane social roles that are dictated to them by the educational hegemony.

Kellner (2000) criticizes this construct as "modern education" in his work Toward a Critical Theory of Education. He asserts that

> Modern education was constructed to develop a compliant work force which would gain skills of print literacy and discipline that would enable them to function in modern corporations and a corporate economy based on rational accounting, commercial organization, and discursive communicative practices, supported by manual labor and service jobs (p. 9).

A glaring problem with contemporary educational institutions is that they become fixed in monomodal instruction with homogenized lesson plans, curricula, and pedagogy, and neglect to address novel political, cultural, or ecological problems (p. 15). The challenge for contemporary educators is engaging in a critical perspective of education, rooted in the established thinking of critical philosophers of education such as Dewey, Freire, Rancière, and Biesta, to create a critical pedagogy that supports an emergent, democratic education. We must dismantle the Hegelian "Master/Slave" dialectic that characterizes the relationship between teachers and students in modern education and encourage intellectual equality and agency for teachers and learners which resolves conflicts between diverse populations and cultures of society.

How does one begin such a journey, the goal of which is a Freirean consciousness of the dominating structures of existing educational systems? In short, we must engage our imagination. Greene (2007) reminds us, in discussing the role of arts in Countering Indifference that "imagination [allows us to reach] towards a future, towards what might be, what should be, what is not yet [...] the arts, among all human creations, have the potential of releasing imagination if the reader or perceiver or listener can lend his/her life to a work." (p. 3). Upon awaking ourselves to realities of suppression through critical

inquiry, we must summon our creative powers to envision future educational goals and possibilities through the arts.

Here we return to the value of arts in education, now realized as an emancipatory tool capable of illuminating imagined futures that free us from hegemonic structures. In building the argument that such value is intrinsic to artistic experience, it is vital that we first resolve misconceptions of education, teaching, and learning that have already presented themselves in this discourse of educational reform.

The Distinction of Education versus Schooling

Maxine Greene (2001) begins her call to initiate new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, and moving with an important point of clarification: "We are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or the quantifiable, not in what is thought of as social control" (p.65). This distinction echoes an established sentiment in Greene's work and carries particular significance to the value of the arts in education. Additionally, it promotes a critical dialectic for constructs of teaching and learning within drastically opposing systems of *education* as opposed to *schooling*. In order to fully appreciate the value of the arts in education, we must first define what education *is* and how it should function. Furthermore, an explanation of *schooling* as a mode of teaching and learning is needed to diametrically oppose such a system to the desire for education.

For centuries, "schooling" has been understood as the education or training one receives to acquire a specific set of skills. "School" is then the physical and/or conceptual space in which schooling takes place. These terms have been troubled over time by various scholars who seek clarification into the complicated and intricate worlds each

term creates. Furthermore, schools and schooling are often used interchangeably with terms such as education, learning, teaching, pedagogy, didactics, instruction, academies, or institutions. Each of these words is charged with meaning in a seemingly endless set of contexts.

First, as a point of clarification, the word "school" will be referenced here as an establishment or institution for schooling. Such a reference should narrow and focus one's understanding of the term. Schools as a place of schooling can be realized as formal and/or informal. One may colloquially refer to their education as the "school of hard knocks" to reference what they have learned from lived experiences. One may also refer to a school as a single room or a large three-story building in which they are instructed by teachers. The distinction of a school as an establishment or institution of schooling makes reference to the latter as a systematized, structured, prescribed place to educate students. Establishments and institutions are very formal realizations of schools with specific parameters and standards for schooling.

In their most extreme examples, schools can be understood as a place to indoctrinate students into a way of thinking and doing, to institutionalize them into an established system. Schools as institutions cannot accomplish such a task without being embedded in social and cultural constructs, which Greene refuted earlier as "social control" (ibid). Schools are formalized to serve the society in which they are established. Schools, therefore, may look wildly different over time and place. For Dewey (1897) "school [was] primarily a social institution...[that] should simplify existing social life" so students may better understand the society they live in. Although Dewey challenged the

formal education of his time, his ideas of schools and schooling were still rooted in the systematization of education in service to society.

Schools, however, are not always a place for "education", and thus, a distinction must be made between the practice of schooling versus education. Historically, American schools were established to teach students a way of functioning in society (Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Ravitch, 2001). The "administrative progressives" in the first half of the twentieth century developed reform initiatives in America that promoted a program of progress which "stemmed from a shared conviction that education was the prime means of directing the course of social evolution" (Tyack and Cuban, p. 17). In historical context, one could make a strong argument for such a view of education, while American society suffered a stratified social structure that was perpetuated by cultural capital such as geography, race, wealth, and education. Providing schooling for every child in the country was a noble and popular pursuit for those in local and national government. As the conversation developed, however, it became clear that those in positions of authority, who were usually those with strong political and financial connections, were making decisions that would structure education in the country in ways that did not always benefit those being educated. Special interest groups and professional organizations, like the National Education Association, were established to promote their visions of schooling, unified by standards that upheld the "modern school proposed by the policy elite" (Tyack and Cuban, p. 19). A system of public schooling was established in America amidst intense debates regarding the purpose, function, management, and cost of education at the turn of the twentieth century (Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Ravitch, 2001).

Eventually the administrative progressives planted their template of a "modern school" in multiple cities across the nation. "In addition to upgrading the quality of the school plant and the qualifications of teachers, they wanted the standard system to have a large staff of certified specialists and administrators; elaborate fiscal accounting; uniform student record cards and guidance procedures; standardized intelligence and achievement tests, a diversified curriculum that included vocational training, physical education, and a host of elective courses at the secondary level; and a policy of grouping children by ability" (Tyack and Cuban, p. 20). Although this system is almost a century old, its structures and policies bear a striking resemblance to what American schooling resembles today. America's society and its educational needs, however, are far from similar to what existed one hundred years ago. Although the administrative progressives fought diligently to institutionalize their vision for education across the country, "mid-century American public education was not a seamless system of roughly similar common schools but instead a diverse and unequal set of institutions that reflected deeply embedded economic and social inequalities" (Tyack and Cuban, p. 22).

Ravitch (2001) outlines the history of education in America with concrete examples of development, change, and reform from its humble parochial roots to its complicated current iteration. As we look to the future, however, Ravitch states

> It is not altogether clear how Americans in the twenty-first century will draw on [their] historic traditions. What does seem likely is that the public will not indefinitely support schools in which children do not learn the skills and knowledge that they require for participation in our society (p. 14).

Ravitch's statement employs a vital term in the disambiguation of schooling that is necessary to form possibilities for American education past our current position:

learning. Learning and teaching, as two requisite components of education, have distinct differences paramount to our understanding of American schooling.

Sarason (2004), as an example, challenges the term "learning" as both convoluted and troublesome. He refers to it as having characteristics of "an inkblot" (p. vii) with multiple interpretations and meanings when viewed from different perspectives. Although Sarason recognizes the challenges that come with asserting the ambiguity of learning, he retorts that "people unreflectively assume that what they mean by learning is obviously clear, right, natural, and proper, and not in need of scrutiny" (Sarason, 2004, p. vii). This lack of consensus, ultimately, inhibits any efforts of improvement or change. Sarason posits "unless, and until, on the basis of careful studies and credible evidence we gain clarity and consensus of the distinguishing features of classroom contexts of productive and unproductive learning, the improvement of schooling and its outcome is doomed" (2004, p. 1). Certainly, a common goal is the continued improvement of the systems of education we create. But how do we move forward without a common understanding of what we mean by learning and teaching and what we want from schooling and education? Assuming at this point that we can agree American schooling is a systematized formal education to serve the assimilation of students into society; the real challenge is recognizing the need for education as opposed to schooling, and learning as opposed to teaching.

The antiquated view that schools must treat children differently based on how they fit a social standard has been perpetuated by the institutionalization of education as schooling. Students have been labeled according to how "normal" they are when compared to such standards. For decades progress in public schooling has been realized

as a “place for every child and every child in his or her place” (Tyack and Cuban, p. 20). The problem with American schooling “stems only incidentally from what [students] can or cannot do and much more radically from the way they are treated by others in relation to the designation, assignment, and distribution of more or less temporary or partial difficulties interpreted as success or failure and responded to in the terms of the Testing world” (Varenne and McDermott, 1999, p. 135).

Education in our current system of schooling promotes teaching as opposed to learning. Education has become prescribed based on predetermined standards that one may exceed, meet, or fail. Because these standards are established away from the students and teachers who are engaged with them, more often than not, the teacher is relegated to dictating the standards as foreign policy to students who are required to receive them. Freire (1970) refers to this as the banking system “Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (p. 72). The banking system of education is schooling. It has become a tradition, inherited from the past, that too many refuse to question or challenge, as they are products of the system and entrenched within a myopic view of what an education free from schooling can be (Horton, 2003). Horton (2003) elaborates

> Teachers [would get up and lecture] which was a carryover from the days when people couldn’t read... So, you had to read to people who were illiterate. We don’t stop today to ask why do we read to people who can read? Why do we lecture to people who can read? There are a lot of hangovers from the past that have no reason for being. They did have a reason at one time but don’t any longer. The whole concept of teaching is an archaic idea. Education should be [a] learning system not a teaching system (p. 223).

Freire echoes this sentiment by clarifying that “to know how to teach is to create possibilities for the construction and production of knowledge rather than to be engaged

simply in a game of transferring knowledge" (Freire, 1998, p. 49). Biesta (2013) proclaims "to learn from someone is a radically different experience from the experience of being taught by someone" (p. 53). The distinction can be challenging to make, but learning and teaching are very different practices which find fruition in education and schooling respectively. Biesta (2010) argues that "any education worthy of its name should always contribute to the processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting" (p. 21).

This construct of student and teacher as learner is not new, but has been met with extreme apprehension and blatant neglect. As Biesta (2010) asserts "it is ... first of all in the interest of those who benefit from the status quo to keep things the way they are rather than to open up discussion about what education might be or become" (p. 16). By challenging the systems of teaching and schooling and implementing structures of learning and education, society can experience an emancipation of creativity, imagination, and intelligence (Rancière, 1991). When we dismantle the notion that intelligence should be stratified like our society, in a system of those who have and those who have not, and focus on the power of intellectual emancipation and the will of the learner, true transformation of society and the genesis of an egalitarian education will rise through the chaff (Rancière, 1991). We must seek harmony in conflicting ideals, not the superiority of one over the other (Brigham & Biesta, 2010). It requires, Rancière suggests, for "teachers in particular [to] merge our competence as learned researchers, our function as teachers working in an institution, and our activity as citizens, into a single energy that advances, in one effort, knowledge transmission, social integration, and civic conscience" (Brigham & Biesta, 2010, p. 15). This then, through the

emancipatory engagement of the teacher and student, is education: an emergent phenomenological act, rooted in social and cultural context, that dialectically establishes both individual and social ontologies and epistemologies.

Artifact #6 - The Value of Universal Teaching in Education

Having established an operational definition of education that promotes learning over teaching, it is important to clarify the role of the teacher in the process of education to develop a philosophy of teaching that can be used to support desired outcomes. The philosophies teachers utilize within the educational process drastically affects the educational outcomes and the ultimate success of learners. This is not to suggest that the act of teaching or teachers should be universal or lack diversity. The pedagogical methods employed and the representative personalities of teachers should be as varied and different as the student populations they engage. A teacher's philosophy of teaching, however, functions as a panacea to the countless challenges and problems teachers face in navigating the multifariousness of education.

I believe the philosophy of *Universal Teaching* offers the greatest potential benefit and value for education, as realized by the concepts of emancipatory learning and intellectual equality posed by Rancière (1991) in his accounts of Joseph Jacotot's work in the Ignorant School Master. Rancière claims the most dangerous question a teacher can ask is "What do you think about it?" This question elicits critical evaluation, which in turn empowers the student and equalizes the projected value of what is being learned. In other words, when a teacher turns and consciously asks the student what they think about the subject being taught, they invite the student's understanding and present a platform for opposing views. This establishes both an ontological and epistemological freedom for

the student and their conceptualizations. The student is all at once galvanized by the emancipatory gesture which equates what the teacher knows to what the student desires to know. In opposition to Freire's banking model referenced earlier, in which the teacher possesses the knowledge which will be deposited to the wanting student, Rancière's question challenges the projected value of what the teacher has offered and invites the student to construct their own meaning. The consequence of this process is two understandings held by the teacher and student respectively that may be engaged in dialogue to unite in accord with one another or generate new understandings in the exploration of their divergence. Jacotot refers to this as *Universal Teaching* in which an egalitarian view of humanity is constructed on the maxims that all human beings are equally capable of learning and everybody can be proficient in anything to which he turns his attention (Rancière, 1991).

I would argue that this model of education as a philosophy of teaching is drastically misunderstood and unappreciated because its intentions and function are purposefully neglected by "ignorant schoolmasters" who perpetuate the stultification of students in education. Furthermore, I believe the perceived conflict of Universal Teaching is axiological in nature. That is, I believe we lack the structures and desire to engage learners in questions of value in fear of competing ontologies and divergent thinking. It is a much greater challenge to appreciate and accept multiple answers to a question as valid than to limit oneself to a correct answer that rejects everything else. This notion has been promoted under many other names, e.g. democratic schooling, constructivism, critical pedagogy, human centered learning, value theory, et cetera. In no way do I wish to diminish the importance and differences of each of these philosophies

by what may seem like an over-generalization. I do, however, hope to cut through the differentiated jargon with Occam's Razor to expose what I believe is fundamentally an issue of value in education.

How often do we invite students, and communities for that matter, to develop their own understanding of the world? This is a very serious question that can only mature in conversations of value. Rancière phrases it "what do you think?" With this question we are challenging the learner to evaluate, analyze, and create meaning from learned or lived experiences. This process is vital to developing the *whole child*, an expressed goal of modern educational reform, and a term that is so widely misunderstood that it has become a cliché (Griffin & Falk, 1993).

Robert Carter (1991), in discussing axiology in education, uses the work of Robert Hartman to explain the role of the "axiological capable educator" as one who "will concentrate on the development of fully-rounded persons, holding the student as being of more value than mere classroom order, or than the comparative academic achievement of the class" (pg. 387). As we seem to struggle with the purpose and function of education, we cannot lose sight of the purpose and function of the one being educated. Paul Clarke (2001) speaks of schools in the future thriving on complex relationships "where students and adults focus on things that matter to them and to their deepening understanding of the world" (pg. 21).

This strikes at the core misconception of educating the *whole child*, as well as the unappreciated potential of a value-laden education. The key phrase is "things that matter to them." This valuation is necessary to emancipate the educated from the so-called "modern" educational system and its positivistic roots. The greatest concern is that such a

change in pedagogical practices requires a complete paradigmatic shift. Rebecca Alber (2009) speaks to this as a practicing teacher struggling to communicate that searching for the "right" answers is often the wrong decision. She recounts her experience hearing the question "Is this right?" She explains

> …I flinch a little when I hear these words from a student. Why? They always serve as a reminder of the wrong turn education has taken. (Or maybe it's always been like this.) It's not their fault, but students are all too often on a quest for the Correct Answers, which has little to do with critical thinking development, I'm afraid.

The questions that will fuel students' future success or failure are not found with a formula and are not bubbled into a scantron. I believe Hargraves and Shirley (2009) reference such questions in their critical work on school improvement envisioned as the Fourth Way. The authors claim for the Fourth Way to "achieve high moral purposes, it must recover and reinvent the fullest meaning of personalization as learning for, through, and about life (pg. 84)." They present three questions in particular that form the foundation of Jesuit pedagogy: Do you have a passion? Are you good at it, or can you become so? Does it serve a compelling social need?

These questions speak directly to the tenets of Universal Teaching. Your passion is expressed as a desire. Asking students if they have a passion is asking what they desire to do and learn. More to the point, your passion generates a personal sense of value. To inquire on what a student is passionate about is to ask them what they value. By asking if they are "good at it" or could become so, you begin the evaluative process to establish curriculum. If you are passionate about mechanics you desire to know more, and in order to begin learning we must know what you already know. In other words, what you do not know is simply the syllabus to what you will learn. It is your inquisitiveness and desire to

know that will lead you to understanding. Rancière (1991) claims "man is a will served by an intelligence". With an acceptance of intellectual equality, one simply must desire to know what they want to learn, and they will learn it. This is truly one of the most extraordinary aspects of humanity: our inexhaustible capability to question and learn in our lives.

In the context of formal education, we must broaden our understanding of achievement and redefine success to be an individualized pursuit that is rooted in an education that challenges and promotes the learners' ability to value their place in the world. The answer is not specificity. We must learn to trust students to make mistakes, and more importantly, we must do our job as educators by encouraging mistakes as opportunities to learn. In fact, in echo of Alber's (2009) sentiment, research shows students learn more from structured errors than simply getting the right answer (Roedinger & Finn, 2009). Myles Horton (1972) states it quite passionately,

> The danger is not too much, but too little participation. People will only learn to make decisions by making them. In addition to providing a means by which people can make education serve their self-determined needs, an updated decision-making process is educational in its own right. It is a means of accelerating the kind of learning people need if they are to take control of their own lives and govern themselves (pg. 229).

This resembles the Deweyan conception of democratic education. Above all else, we must promote valuation in pedagogy for both the learner and the educator. We must ask "what do you think?" Only through critical self-inquiry can the learner be emancipated. Through this invitation, the educator will become learner, and the subsequent intellectual equality will produce a will to learn that is defined by the value of the individual, not the institution.

The Inauthenticity of Teaching

In exploring the notion of *educating* versus *schooling*, I began to connect the existentialist concept of *authenticity* to the role the teacher must play in these conflicting systems of learning. In reflecting on my experiences as a public school student in the state of Texas (K-12), and as a former teacher in Texas public schools (2012-2019); I recognize that a large majority of teachers that I knew and worked with suffer from what Sartre (1943) refers to as *bad faith*. This practice of self-deception in the midst of inauthenticity reflects the modern professional environment for teachers who are encouraged to educate their students by emancipating them from social and cultural bonds, while simultaneously *schooling* them in the standardized expectations of societal norms. Many philosophers have addressed this conundrum head on and call for awareness through a *leap of faith* for both educators and students.

Jacques Rancière (1991) refers to this as the *stultification of learning* from an *Ignorant Schoolmaster* who fails to recognize the limitations of antiquated pedagogical systems that place the teacher in a position of perceived authority, in which the students must serve their instructor by practicing an arcane ritual of learning. Rancière calls for *intellectual emancipation*: a liberation of self-imposed restrictions on one's true potential to learn. Rancière explains… "To emancipate an ignorant person, one must be, and one need only be, emancipated oneself, that is to say, *conscious* of the true power of the human mind (p. 15)."

This concept of consciousness relates directly to the work of Paolo Freire, who called for *conscientization* in education in the late 1960's "not as a panacea but as an attempt at critical awareness" (1998, p. 43). He explained further,

> In the face of pragmatic, reactionary, and fatalistic neoliberal philosophizing, I still insist, without falling into the trap of "idealism," on the absolute necessity of conscientization. In truth, conscientization is a requirement of our human condition. It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity (p. 43).

Freire observed what he referred to as the basic "banking system" of education, in which students were merely receptacles into which teachers were tasked with depositing or delivering knowledge. Although Freire's work is dated, sadly, I can attest to such a system still perpetuated in contemporary classrooms today. Teachers are expected to deliver content to students in order to satisfy "educational standards," which are expressed as standardized expectations of what students can and should know at prescribed moments in their lives.

I believe a staggering majority of the teachers you speak to would profess an earnest desire to overcome the rigors of their profession and institute pedagogical practices that echo the sentiment of Rancière's (1991) *universal teaching*: "to learn something and to relate to it all the rest by this principle: all men have equal intelligence" (p. 18). But therein lies the contradiction. In *teaching* every day in a system of schooling that negates the concept of individualization, although teachers are conscious of their desire to emancipate learners from such a system, teachers are practicing *bad faith*. How does such a practice continue? Put simply, obedience and complacency are easier. To challenge the system is to complicate learning. There is a need, however, to problematize education in order to reap its potential benefits. It is necessary to emancipate both the student and the teacher. Such action gives teachers an opportunity to construct meaning

and purpose for their work independent of systematized standards and assessments. It is in short, authoring themselves as autonomous professional agents.

I believe what is needed is what Maxine Greene (1977) describes as wide-awakeness, "a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake" (p.121). In this state, we complicate our lives by appreciating the endless complexities of human interaction and interdependence. Greene employs the somewhat comical anecdote of when Søren Kierkegaard resolved to be an author to illustrate the intense need for consciousness.

> Kierkegaard recognized, while seated in a park on a Sunday afternoon, the preoccupation of his peers in their goal to improve their quality of life and in turn make things easier for their fellow man. He chastised the "benefactors of the age" who worked so tirelessly to ease the lives of others, but ultimately condemned their future to a systematized existence which he called the "civilizational malaise." From his observations, Kierkegaard resolved to dedicate himself to complicating life for others by challenging what we know and accept as reality. He sought to create difficulty in everything as to incite beauty in the complexity of our lives, as opposed to ignoring such intricacies in a hopeless attempt to simplify life (Greene, 1977, p.291).

Greene promotes such thinking and argues that she

> would approach [her] choices in philosophy, criticism, and psychology in the same fashion: those works that engage people in posing questions with respect to their own projects, their own life situations. William James, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, George Santayana, Alfred North Whitehead, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau Ponty: these, among the modern philosophers, are likely to move readers to think about their own thinking, to risk examination of what is presupposed or taken for granted, to clarify what is vague or mystifying or obscure. To "do" philosophy in this fashion is to respond to actual problems and real interests, to the requirements of sense-making in a confusing world. It may also involve identification of lacks and insufficiencies in that world—and some conscious effort to repair those lacks, to choose what ought to be. Some of the humanistic or existential psychologies may function similarly as they

> engage students in dialogue about what it is to be human, to grow, to be (1977, p.123).

I believe such a sentiment expresses exactly what is meant by the existentialist leap of faith from the inauthentic to the authentic life. It is a loud and alarming call to realize the necessity of complexity and the beauty of complicating our lives with the individuality of self. As an educator, I strive to awaken my own students to their endless potential and in turn learn more of the human condition and the role I play in awakening others to themselves. The stultification of modern education and systematization of learning are perpetuated by teachers who practice *bad faith* and do not take the crucial leap required to achieve authentic learning, the learning of oneself.

It is from this posture, humbled by the momentous task of learning, that I turn inward to reflect on my past experiences as an educator. Through this retelling of lived experience, I will excavate my own perceptions, reactions, and responses to better understand my sense of professional teacher agency. The artifacts and narratives that follow, in chapter six, represent the last two years that I taught public school in central Texas. The present chapter was designed to invite you into my understanding and thinking of teaching and learning which positions you to better appreciate the artifacts and narratives in the subsequent chapter.

I ask that you read the chapter that follows with the context offered in both chapters five and six. Chapter five is designed to illuminate the driving questions about accountability for fine arts teachers in the state of Texas that ultimately brought me to the PhD program at Texas State, specifically to explore and develop my desire for School Improvement. The context offered in chapter five is focused on my earliest research in education between 2014 and 2016. Upon unveiling the agentic problems I was facing in

my position as a public school orchestra director in central Texas, which had been shrouded by my misunderstanding of the socio-political structures that I was operating within, my inquiries evolved to focus specifically on the concept of teacher agency (late in 2016). Such a topic, as I would come to understand it, cannot be fully explored and appreciated without challenging hegemonic structures of education that I had inherited and was trained to uphold. Thus, my awakening to the inevitable journey toward my authentic self as both educator and learner began. It was and is a slow and tedious process without a definitive end. What I aspire to, however, is a renewing of my curiosity to better understand who I was, who I am, and who I aspire to be. This temporal framework and the process of reflexivity, referenced by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), Margaret Archer (2007, 2010, 2012), and Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson (2015a), among others, will be utilized in chapter seven to structure my analysis of the events that follow.

As you read chapter six, again, I invite you to bring the context form previous chapters and to pay close attention to the timing and development of each event. Although you are invited and encouraged to develop opinions of the somewhat fragmented details that are provided within each artifact and narrative, I encourage you to zoom in and out of the text (Chang, 2008) to challenge your perceptions and perspectives and to specifically create space to ask and answer questions that will inevitably accompany your reading. I invite you to find yourself and others in the reading, and to get *lost* in the reading of these lived experiences (Lather, 1997) as you make them your own through analogy, simile, sympathy, and empathy.

CHAPTER VI

THE NARRATIVES

This chapter includes nine artifacts from my last two years of employment as a high school orchestra director in central Texas and four narratives which detail my experiences with structures of financial, academic, and professional accountability and their ultimate effect on my sense of professional teacher agency.

All identifying information and names have been removed from each *artifact* to protect identities and to encourage you, as the reader, to see yourself and others in the text. Titles of the individuals referenced in each artifact have remained, although they do not directly correlate to the official titles the individuals held. This has been done to better appreciate the politics and power structures evidenced in the interactions between individuals and myself as [Teacher]. Although the artifacts pertain directly to my personal experiences, my name has intentionally been removed to better appreciate the content and context of each artifact as it relate to other teachers, not just myself.

Similarly, the names of individuals in the *narratives* have been removed but their title and position have remained to better contextualize the personal and professional relationships that existed between them and me, as the subject. I have intentionally included my name in the narrative to discourage the reader from projecting themselves into my role within the narrative. I recognize the narrative as a highly subjective, interpretive retelling of my experiences and I invite you to read them as an objective observer rather than a subjective participant.

Financial Accountability

Artifact #7 - E-mail Correspondence

Date: January 3, 2017 5:08pm
From: [The Assistant Director of Finance]
To: [Teacher]
CC: High School Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Superintendent
Subject: Tri-M Honor Society Deposit

[Teacher],

There are several issues with a deposit we have received today which need to be addressed immediately -

1. The receipts attached to the deposit total $210.00 ($180.00 in cash, $30.00 in checks) yet the bank deposit is only for $81.00 This means $129.00 of student dues are missing.
2. One receipt, #670416, is missing.
3. All receipts for cash are dated October 7, 2016, except for one which is dated November 15, 2016. Two checks are dated November 8, 2016.
   Yet the money was not turned in to the campus Finance Secretary until December 09, 2016. Untimely deposits also have been an issue previously that we had addressed with you.
4. A receipt from HEB in the amount of $96.44 is attached to this deposit which implies that $100 cash was taken from the students' dues to purchase food on November 19, 2016. This is illegal and considered misappropriation of funds.
5. The money in this deposit was specifically collected from our students for membership dues in the Tri-M Honor Society which is a student organization and the students are deciding by vote how the funds are to be spend [sic]. These outcome [sic] of the votes and the decision are to be recorded by the organizations' treasurer in the Minutes of the monthly meetings.

Immediate Action Required -

1. The missing $129.00 must be turned in by you to the Business Office no late than 4:00pm tomorrow, Wednesday, January 4, 2017.
2. The missing receipt #670416 must be turned in by you to the Business Office no later than 4:00pm tomorrow, Wednesday, January 4, 2017.
3. In the future when you collect money you must issue a receipt to the payee and then give a copy of the receipt with the collected money to the Campus Finance Secretary or to the Principal before you leave for the day. Money collected, checks or money orders are not to be kept in a classroom nor are they to be taken home by the employee.
4. Taking money from collected funds instead of making a deposit is illegal. It is considered misappropriation of funds or theft. The $96.44 from the HEB purchase are a part of the missing $129.00 that you are to turn in by 4:00pm tomorrow.

This purchase was made without an approved purchase order on file and per SMCISD Purchasing Policies CH is therefore not the liability of the district. You have been made aware of this policy in the past as well.

5. All records including but not limited to minutes of all meetings, officer elections, names of current and past officers, meeting agendas, and all financials regarding the Student Organizations of Tri-M Honor Society and High School Orchestra are to be given to the Business Office for review no later than 4:00pm Wednesday, January 4, 2017.

Attached please find the SMCISD deposit form and all receipts for the deposit, the HEB receipt, SMCISD Purchasing Policy CH, and SMCISD Policy CFD (Local) regarding Accounting for Activity Funds Management.

If you are unclear with regard to the actions necessary or want to discuss any of this please contact me. We can also schedule an appointment with the [Assistant Superintendent of Finance], and if needed [the High School Principal] to discuss this in further details.

[Assistant director of finance]

Date: January 4, 2017 2:44pm
From: [Teacher]
To: [Assistant Director of Finance]
CC: High School Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, High School Assistant Principal
Subject: Re: Tri-M Honor Society Deposit

[Assistant director of finance],

Below are my responses to the items for immediate action you requested:

1. The $129.00 that has been reported missing has been found within missing financial documentation of the Tri-M Music Honor Society (which is being sent to your office). $30 was reported to be a calculation error when adding the checks and currency on the original deposit form and the $99 remaining is a part of an HEB purchase voted on by the officers of the organization on October 14 (the receipt for that purchase is already in your procession [sic] and a copy is attached to the aforementioned deposit form).
2. The missing receipt number #670416 has been sent to your office with a copy of its place in the organizations receipt book. The receipt (as seen in the copy of the receipt book) was skipped when writing receipts. I have included the original receipt and the yellow copy, which are also blank, for your records.
3. I am aware of the policies associated with collected funds and their timely deposit. There were documented issues of the student officers specifically the treasurer and secretary, not documenting or collecting funds within the

appropriate guidelines or expectations established by the organization, which ultimately generated issues for the submission of collected funds. We (myself and the co-advisors of the organization) have removed the student officers from their positions due to negligence. I, in turn, also resolve to earnestly continue to honor the finance policies in my practices as a program director and student organization sponsor to the best of my ability and humbly request a handbook and training to ensure the success of this resolution.

4. As stated in item two above, the "missing funds" in question were found in the documentation being provided. In context to the purchase being made at HEB I recognize the error in protocol and I assume responsibility as the sponsor of the organization. The purchase was voted upon by the officers before the purchase was made, but I understand that this is not the purchasing practice or policy for spending activity funds.
5. I am submitting a copy of the minutes recorded by the secretaries of the Tri-M Music Honor Society as well as the SMHS Orchestra program. I am also sending the original and yellow copy of the "missing receipt" #670416 and a copy of its place in the receipt book. Additionally I am including a hand written record of the Tri-M treasurer who submitted the document upon being removed from his position today.

Earnestly,
[Teacher]

Date: January 4, 2017 5:20pm
From: [The Assistant Director of Finance]
To: [Teacher]
CC: High School Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, High School Assistant Principal
Subject: Re: Re: Tri-M Honor Society Deposit

I have received all of the requested documentation and I am currently reviewing it. There is one other question I need answered: The majority of the receipts date back to October 7, 2016. Who had this money and where was it kept until the deposit date of December 9, 2016?

The $30.00 was listed twice, once in the deposit form and once in the receipts which accounts for the error in calculation.

Thank you for sending the original and the carbons of the missing receipt, #670416. The minutes are vague but I found the notation in regards to purchasing food on October 14, 2016 one month prior to the actual purchase.

The students did approve the purchase of food for the Price Center event, including a price range of the expenditure.

All minutes of the Tri-M Honor Society have been signed by two club officers. Please assure that the minutes are more detailed in the future.

[High School Principal] has requested training on Activity Fund Accounting and Purchasing Procedures for [their] campus and we are working on putting this together. As a reminder: all funds collected must be receipted.

All funds collected must be turned in to the Principal or her/his designee before leaving for the day.

All funds collected must be locked in a secure place such as a safe or a vault until deposited in the district depository bank.

All funds must be deposited in the bank within two business days.
It is illegal to take any amount of money in any form (cash, check, gift cards or money order) and for any reason from collected funds.

All expenditures must have an approved purchase order on file prior to making the purchase or committing to an expense.

Minutes of the club meetings must be more detailed and signed by two officers.
Please let me know if you have any question or need clarification.

[Associate director of finance]

Date: January 5, 9:16pm
From: [Teacher]
To: [Assistant Director of Finance]
CC: High School Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, High School Assistant Principal
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Tri-M Honor Society Deposit

[Assistant Director of Finance],

To address your question about the money and receipts which date back to October I must refer to the concerns mentioned in my previous message about the ability of the student officers to adequately fulfill their responsibilities.

Some of the receipts were written retroactively because the treasurer did not have access to the receipt book when they collected funds. On another occasion the treasurer found money that he had been given in an envelope that [they] forgot to turn into me. Although we requested the payment of dues during our regularly scheduled meetings, several students would approach the treasurer outside our meetings and give them payments for

their dues. We reconciled all of the student dues that were paid and wrote receipts for everyone that paid dues, needless to say there were errors in the book keeping do [sic] to inconsistencies with receiving the funds. These issues were addressed with the treasurer and were systematically resolved. Other issues in terms of the book keeping arose and, as mentioned, the decision was made to remove the treasurer from office.

Additionally, I know that there have been delays in processing the deposit forms because there were not receipts to accompany the deposit. The [Principal's Finance Secretary] deposited the money to the bank the same day I turned it in to them, but the paperwork would be delayed until I had supplied the appropriate documents. The [Principal's Finance Secretary] expressed concern for this throughout the semester and I worked with our treasurer to ensure that our deposits were handled correctly.

In terms of the physical location of the funds, when I receive any money from students I place it in a money bag and lock it in my desk until I turn it in to the [Principal's Finance Secretary]. This has been my protocol for several years to safeguard the money until I can visit the [Principal's Finance Secretary] in the front office. I have money bags labeled for Tri-M and the Orchestra which each hold the deposit receipts and other financial records for each organization.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,
[Teacher]

Date: January 6, 2017 8:32am
From: [Assistant Superintendent of Finance]
To: [Teacher]
CC: High School Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, High School Assistant Principal, Assistant Director of Finance
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Tri-M Honor Society Deposit

[Teacher],

I am disappointed that your students are being held responsible due to a lack of leadership from their sponsor. As a teacher and or leader, it is our responsibility to ensure our students learn how to be productive citizens. It is our responsibility to ensure our students understand the responsibility of handling money and receipts. Obviously, these students were not properly taught how to account and document accurately. This again falls back on your leadership ability. I see this as a teachable moment for both you and your students. I hope you take this opportunity to make a "wrong" a "right" and teach your students how to do this correctly. They WILL need to know proper accounting in any job they do in the future. The first step is owning the responsibility and correcting the

action. Please let us know how you will be **CORRECTING** this action and how you will teach your students proper accounting practices!

Date: January 10, 2017 3:31pm
From: [Assistant Director of Finance]
To: [Teacher]
Subject: Wells Fargo Account

I am currently reviewing the financial documentation from Student Clubs that you are the sponsor of.

Who does the bank account at Wells Fargo belong to?

[Assistant Director of Finance]

Date: January 10, 2017 4:00pm
From: [Teacher]
To: [Assistant Director of Finance]
CC: High School Principal, High School Assistant Principal
Subject: Re: Wells Fargo Account

Without more context I assume you are referring to the Orchestra Booster account. The only Wells Fargo bank account I know of that was associated with a student organization that I sponsor is the SMCISD Orchestra Booster account.

That booster club was dissolved last spring due to inactivity. There are now separate booster clubs for the high school and middle school orchestra programs. They were just formed this fall (in October). We have not been able to report all of the information requested on the booster as it is still being formed. The booster closed the Wells Fargo account and opened a new account at A+ Federal Credit Union this past week.

Let me know if you have any other questions and I will do my best to answer them.
Sincerely,
[Teacher]

Date: January 10, 2017 5:21pm
From: Assistant Director of Finance
To: [Teacher]
CC: Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Superintendent, High School Principal, High School Assistant Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Subject: Re: Re: Wells Fargo Account

[Teacher],

My apologies, I am referring to the Wells Fargo account ending in XXXX.

Please bring us copies of all signature cards and the bank statements for this bank account for the last three years.

As there is also a new account at A+ Federal Credit Union we are requesting the signature cards for this account as well.

Also, are there any debit cards for either of those accounts? If so, who is/was authorized to use them?

Please have the requested documentation at our offices by no later than 2:00pm tomorrow January 11, 2017.

[Assistant Director of Finance]

Date: January 10, 2017 9:18pm
From: [Teacher]
To: Assistant Director of Finance
CC: Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Superintendent, High School Principal, High School Assistant Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Finance Staff, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Wells Fargo Account

[Assistant Director of Finance],

Here is what I can offer…

I do not have access to the Wells Fargo account, since it was established by the SMCISD Orchestra Booster Club.

The original signers on that account where [Parent A & B] and [Parent C]. They also each had a debit card (to my knowledge). I requested (and was granted) viewing privileges for the SMCISD Orchestra Booster account, which meant that I could view the account balance and activity through wellsfargo.com. I did not have signing privileges or a debit card. [Parent B] resigned from their position due to personnel [sic] matters and [Parent A] moved to Houston over two years ago. [Parent C] kept the account open and remained the only officer for the orchestra booster club for more than a year. [Parent D] served as an officer of the booster last year with [Parent C], although she was never added to the Wells Fargo account. Last spring (2016) the decision was made to establish a separate middle school and high school booster, rather than one booster for the whole

district, to better serve the growing needs of the middle school and high school respectfully [sic].

[The Middle School Orchestra Director] has been working with middle school parents to establish the middle school booster. They are still working on opening a new account at a+ Federal Credit Union.

I have been working with high school parents to establish a high school orchestra booster. They established by-laws, had their first few meetings and elected officers this fall (in October). The officers just opened a new account with A+ Federal Credit Union this weekend.

I am not a signer on any of the booster accounts so I cannot provide you with the information you are requesting. I can, however, provide you with contact information for [Parent C] (who is our current high school orchestra booster president) and [Parent E] (who is serving as our high school orchestra booster treasurer). I did contact them to let them know that you may be contacting them to retrieve the information you requested above. Here is their contact information: [contact information not included]

Any and all physical records that I am able to offer in reference to the old booster account at Wells Fargo should be with you already in the files I gave to [High School Assistant Principal] last week.

Any new documents that are associated with the newly formed high school orchestra booster will be available through [Parent C] or [Parent E].

Please let me know if I can offer anything else.

[Teacher]

Date: January 19, 2017 9:02am
From: [Assistant Superintendent of Finance]
To: [Teacher]
CC: Assistant Director of Finance
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Wells Fargo Account

[Teacher],

I have a couple of questions for you…

1. Do you know the difference between a booster club and a student activity account?
2. How long have you been a sponsor for SMCISD?
3. Why would deposit [sic] student generated funds in a booster club account?
4. If you have access to this account (Wells Fargo account) via a debit card, then who is controlling the expenses of this account?

5. Why is it so difficult to get information on this account? Why are you putting the burden on the district to get this information.
6. Why did you ask the new members to close the Wells Fargo account and open one at A+.

Thank you for your assistance
[Assistant Superintendent of Finance]

Date: January 19, 2017 9:26am
Draft To: [Assistant Superintendent of Finance]
[Assistant Superintendent of Finance],

Please see my response to your questions below as outlined in your previous email:

1. Yes. Based on the knowledge and experience I have sought, gathered and received, I know the difference between a booster account and a student activity account.
2. I have sponsored the Tri-M Music Honor Society for the past 3 years. The chapter was re-chartered in 2014. I have been the program director for the orchestra since 2012, which assumes many of the responsibilities of a sponsor of a student organization, although there are distinct differences (e.g. coursework, recruitment, TEKS, administrative assessment i.e. T-TESS, etc.).
3. I am confused by the syntax of this sentence if this does not address your question, but I believe you are asking why student fees where [sic] deposited in the booster account. The answer is quite simple, I was advised to do so by colleagues that have operated and continue to operate under the precedent of their own boosters. When the district orchestra booster was established over four years ago.
4. I did not, nor do I currently, haver a debit card in my name for the booster account. The only "access" I had was given to me by the former booster president ([Parent A]), which was basic viewing privileges through wellsfargo.com so I could monitor the balance of the account. This was taken away when [Parent A] moved to Houston and removed [themselves] from the accounts. Besides this, I have always worked with the booster officers (who remained, or took over vacant positions after [Parent A & B] left) to allocate funds to the needs of the orchestra program.
5. I cannot explain the difficulty that you may be experiencing to retrieve information on the account other than the fact that the account was closed and very few people had access to it while it was open. I have made no intentions to "burden" anyone with the requests that have been made. I have supplied everything that I have access to upon request.
6. I did not ask the booster club to close the Wells Fargo account. They voted on moving banks for multiple reasons. Again, I do not have the authority or ability to make that type of decision. I was present at the meeting when the booster decided to move banks and I offered some pros and cons to their decision, but the decision and actions that followed was ultimately theirs.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

[Teacher]

Artifact #8 - Letter of Reprimand

Memo To: Christopher Hanson
Through: [High School Principal]
From: [High School Assistant Principal]
Date: Thursday, March 6th, 2017
RE: Letter of Reprimand

The following is the summary of financial review of your school accounts. as we have discussed, you must follow district policy and keep you records in a timely manner. In addition, you must turn in all required paperwork on time and completed thorough.

Per [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance]:
"Our office has been reviewing several transactions pertaining to the [High School Orchestra] and its many accounts. The review started because of an improper expense with an untimely deposit, and lack of supporting documentation for that deposit. Our review has brought forth the following concerns:"

1) The current Orchestra sponsor is operating under several different groups:
    A. The Tri-M Honor Society (Student Group)
    B. The [High School] Orchestra (Student Group)
    C. The [High School] Orchestra Booster Club (Parent Organization)
    D. The [Community] Orchestra (Outside Private Group)
2) The funds are being co-mingled between accounts. We found several deposits that were generated from student group organizations that were deposited into the Booster club account. Additionally, we found lack of documentation for funds being spent from the various account [sic]. (For example: We found "dues" generates from the Tri M Honor Society, were in turn, deposited to the booster club checking account. We found documentation for four money orders that were given to students; however, the money was paid from the sponsor's personal checking account. We also found an expense from the booster club for rented property; however, the invoice is to the sponsor and his wife using his personal address and email.) This is clearly a miss-management of funds.
3) When asked for supporting documentation for the various clubs, very little could be supported. There are several expenses made and no documentation was provided. When the club sponsor was asked to supply the requested information, we were told that the previous members had the information (who left over two years ago). The new booster club officers have just recently opened a new account at another financial institution.
4) In addition, the old account had a debit card (as stated by the sponsor) which could lead to "dual control" concerns. Most club accounts are set up with two signatures required to ensure embezzlement of funds can be avoided.

5) Just this week, the Orchestra Club was advertising a fundraiser for the "[High School] Orchestra]". We have asked that all activity be "placed on hold" until we have concluded our review. When we brought this to the principal's attention, [they] had not been notified that the fundraiser was happening. In addition, the Assistant Finance Director was visited by the Booster Club officers upset that we declined the fundraiser. Again, this brings about major concerns that the clubs are being operated and co-mingled together. The flyer had no indication that this was a booster club sponsored event. The contact information on the flyer, directs individuals to order directly from the sponsor using his high school district email, not the booster club.
6) In reviewing the past records, an email (January, 2013) from the former Finance Director [name redacted], was reviewed in which collecting money, making timely deposits, and distinction of funds was an issue. When I asked the sponsor directly if he knew the difference between student and booster clubs, his response was yes.

As a follow-up to the issues cited above, this will serve as an official letter of reprimand for your actions. You are directed to adhere to the following statements as official directives when performing your duties with respect to communicating with parents and grading while providing feedback to meet expectations for a teacher at [the high school].

1) You are directed to follow all fundraising activity, revenue collection, purchasing and expense guidelines, protocols, and timelines as outlined in [the district] Finance office training provided on Monday February 20th, 2017.
2) You are directed to follow all [High School] guidelines, protocols, and timelines for issuance or deposit of funds from Student Activity account, or Program Activity accounts.
3) You are directed to follow proper guidelines and protocol in scheduling any fundraisers for any of the organizations you represent.
4) The Booster Club Officers need to review UIL Guidelines and proper Booster Club procedures before continuing with any more activities.
5) You are to complete all required paperwork on time.
6) You are to complete all grade reports by the assigned timeline.

I am confident you understand the importance of complying with the directives mentioned above. Failure to follow these directives may result in further personnel action. If you do not fully understand these directives or what is expected of you, please notify me immediately.

If you disagree with the contents of this memorandum, you may submit a written response to me within ten working days of your dates signature. Your signature on this memorandum does not indicate you agree with its content. Your signature only indicates that you received a copy of this memorandum.

[The memorandum is signed by the teacher and dated 3/24/2017]

Artifact #9 - Written Response: Filling the Gaps

To: [High School Assistant Principal]
From: [Teacher]
Date: April 2, 2017
RE: Response to letter of reprimand dated Thursday, March 23rd

Dear [High School Assistant Principal],

I am writing you with several concerns for the content of a letter of reprimand I received last week on March 23rd regarding a "financial review" of the school accounts I oversee as the [High School] Orchestra Director and the Sponsor of the Tri-M Music Honor Society Chapter at [the High School]. A majority of my concerns stem from incredulously vague reports and questions generated by the district's Business office under the supervision of [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance]. I have attached several emails that were exchanged between myself, [the Assistant Director of Finance] and [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] between January 2rd and January 19th. Forgive me for the pedantic nature of the following events, but it is germane to the concerns I was to address in the letter of reprimand.

The emails I have attached are the only correspondence I have had with the [Assistant Superintendent of Finance] and [their] staff regarding the concerns [they] outline in the March 23rd write up I was presented with last week. The e-mails that I received from [the Assistant Director of Finance], although professional and direct, imposed unrealistic deadlines for a litany of records and documents. I am referring specifically to the email from [the Assistant Director of Finance] sent on Thursday, January 3rd at 5:08pm. This was the day before the spring semester began. The list of items designated as "Immediate Action Required" concludes with the demand that "All records including but not limited to minutes of all meetings, officer elections, Names of current and past officers, meeting agendas, and all financials regarding the Student Organizations of Tri-M Honor Society and High School Orchestra are to be given to the Business Office for review no later than 4:00pm on Wednesday, January 4, 2017." I want to bring it to your attention that the actions immediately required were expected in less than 24 hours and the email was not sent until after the end of the business day. In addition to the obvious time constraint, Wednesday was the first instructional day of the spring semester. I co-teach one middle school class in the morning, and teach 3 courses at the high school starting at 10am on Wednesdays. I had no idea how I was supposed to provide all of the required documentation while performing my regular duties, and unfortunately, to meet the imposed deadlines I was pulled from my classes and spent the majority of my day collecting the requested materials outlined in the January 3rd email from [the Assistant Director of Finance].

All of the actions which required immediate attention were satisfied by 3pm on January 4th and accompanied by written response which was emailed on the same day at 2:44pm. [The Assistant Director of Finance] confirmed receipt of the items and provided a list of "reminders" without citation to written policy or procedure. [They] also presented a new question regarding the dates of receipts for the Tri-M Honor Society.

The next day (Thursday, January 5th) you visited me during my 8th period class to collect all financial records and documents I had in my office. You said that you were there on the directive of the [High School Principal] and that you were simply told to collect everything that I had and report to [the High School Principal's] office. As I am sure you can recall, I was concerned by the apparent urgency of the request and I complied by providing all of the financial documents I had in my office since I began working in the district in 2012.

That evening I responded to the new question [the Assistant Director of Finance] posed regarding receipts of the Tri-M Honor Society. My explanation was met with an incredibly curt email from [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] (which is one of only two times that I have received communication from [them]) on Friday, January 6th, that expressed [their] "disappointment in my apparent "lack of leadership" in working with my students. I believe it is important to know that I have not worked with [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] in any capacity, let alone had the opportunity for [them] to witness or observe my leadership skills and interactions with my students to warrant such an accusation.

I did not receive any additional correspondence over the weekend. The next week, however, [the Assistant Director of Finance] emailed me on Tuesday, January 10th at 3:31pm (while I was teaching) with new questions regarding a Wells Fargo account. I responded immediately after my class at 4pm, and requested context to her question to provide a better answer. [The Assistant Director of Finance] in turn responded after the work day at 5:21pm with a request for "copies of all signature cards and bank statements for (the Wells Fargo account in question) for the last 3 years." [They] also requested signature cards for the new A+ Federal Credit Union account opened by the newly formed [High School] Orchestra Booster Club. All of this was expected by 2:00pm the next day (Wednesday, January 11th), less than 21 hours from the original request.

That evening (January 10th at 9:18pm) I supplied [the Assistant Director of Finance] with as much information as I could and I referred [them] to the officers of the [High School] Orchestra Booster, since I did not have access to most of the information she requested.

[The Assistant Superintendent of Finance] than responded with a list of questions that were both abrupt and accusatory without any context or explanation. I responded to all of [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance's] questions within 30 minutes of receiving [their] email while I was at [one of the middle schools]. To date I have had no other communication with [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance].

With the events outlined above in mind, I would like to address specific concerns I have with [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance's] report contained in the body of the letter of reprimand in question.

First, [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] begins [their] report of the review that was conducted by [their] office by identifying the "[High School] Orchestra and its many accounts." This is in desperate need of disambiguation.

[The Assistant Superintendent of Finance] continues by stating that the review brought forth concerns that "the current Orchestra sponsor (Which I must assume is referencing me, since there is no such thing as an orchestra sponsor) who is "operating under several different accounts: The Tri-M Music Honor Society, the [High School] Orchestra, the [High School] Orchestra Booster Club, and the [Community Orchestra]."

Although I am engaged with all of these organizations, there is no explanation as to why my functioning in these varied capacities warrants concern. I have always considered my diverse involvement in our campus, district and community an asset and I am still unclear as to why my work with each of these organizations would be an item of concern (as it [sic] clearly delineated in [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance's] list).

The second item of concern posits several serious financial infractions, e.g. the co-mingling of funds between accounts, dues generated from Tri-M that were supposedly deposited into a booster account, and property rented by the booster in my name. What troubles me most about these items, is that NONE of them were ever addressed with me in the process of [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance's] financial review. Any notion of due process was blatantly overlooked. I have yet to discuss any of these concerns with [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] and I would prefer to be presented with the evidence for such, before being accused of "mismanagement of funds."

[The Assistant Superintendent of Finance] references in [their] third concern that [they] asked "for supporting documents for the various clubs," and that "very little could be supported." This is unabashedly false! I provided an immense amount of documentation for the finances of all of the entities in question on January 5th upon request without hesitation. Furthermore, none of the concerns [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] references from the documents [they] were provided were ever addressed with me directly.

The fourth concern caries an undocumented and erroneous insinuation that there is a question of embezzlement of funds. Ironically, [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] references an email correspondence between myself and [name redacted] (a former Finance Director for the district) in which several financial issues were addressed. Most of the issues addressed were pertaining to a large scale fine arts production that I organized at the high school in the Fall of 2012 (my first fall semester in the district). I began planning the production in the summer of 2012 and had extensive conversations with the high school fine arts faculty (who were all engaged in the production) as well as the high school administration. The production was not financially successful due to a lack of ticket sales and sponsors and I was held personally responsible for financing the production. I took out a $4,000 personal loan to pay for the expenses after being advised by the business office that the school would not support the production which was contradictory to previous conversations that were had at the campus level. This, in turn, sparked a year long conversation with the business office (see attached emails from 2013-2014 [not attached]), particularly the previous Assistant Superintendent of Finance [name redacted]. in which I requested on multiple occasions a written document outlining the financial policies and procedures of the district. Such a document was never produced and my last conversation about the "handbook" [the former Assistant Superintendent of Finance] was working on took place on May 19, 2014 in which [the former Assistant Superintendent of Finance] said the "handbook is almost complete. We just have a few more revisions to do and it will be published and distributed this summer." To my knowledge the handbook was never completed and nothing pertaining to the policies and procedures of the business office was generated or distributed that summer.

[The Assistant Superintendent of Finance] is correct in stating that a review of past records reveals a history of issues with the collection of money, making timely deposits, and distinguishing funds; the statement, however, is misguided, in that the

issues have been around a lack of continuity, communication, training, and consistency between faculty and the business office.

I would also like to report that as of today (April 2, 2017) the financial documents that I provided on January 5, 2017 have not been fully returned. A large amount of the documents I provided was missing when I received a bag of documents you returned to me on March 24, 2017. If any of the claims from [the Assistant Superintendent of Finance] report are going to be considered valid, I would like to formally request a review of the concerns with substantiated evidence.

Earnestly,
[Teacher]

Narrative #1 - The Threat

I cannot forget the smell of school cleaner. There is something about it that is both comforting and triggering. A reminder of my own days in school as a student, and the good days of teaching… because there were good days.

As I wept in the newly labeled unisex bathroom of the "front office" as it was ominously called, I couldn't help but think of my son. My wife was 8 months pregnant with our second child… they knew this… I had talked to them about it… I shared pictures and received their congratulations.

And yet… here I was, clutching my stomach to stop the wrenching pain caused by the realization that my principal wanted to fire me.

But we don't "fire" teachers of course. I was being "recommended for non-renewal." Just like that… after 6 years of my life, completely dedicated to this school, this district… this program… to my students.

There were too many questions to process: How could they do this to me? How could they do this to the students? How could they do this to my family? What is the truth? Where are the lies? Did they really care about me? Was it all a lie? Why do I think I am so special?

Everyone is subject to accountability… is that what this is? Is this accountability?

And then the sudden realization… "They don't even know me!" How could I be recommended for "non-renewal" by a principal that has only been here for 9 months?

I guess that is all it takes to understand a teacher… to understand another human being.

I was hurt… no, I was angry… no, I was pissed! How could this happen? These people don't even know what I have been through. They don't even care to ask. They don't know anything but what they want to know… then again, aren't I guilty of the same thing? Did I choose to "ignore the warnings?" Was my colleague right… "just fly under the radar… you don't have to stop doing all of the things you're doing; you just can't get noticed." They did the same thing… this is how it works, at least, it is what I was taught: Pats on the back, handshakes and winks, the endless promise that "well, I am not supposed to, but this is the last time." What precedent was I being held to? How can there be a precedent if there is no policy? I can't be the only one who has experienced this. I know I am not the only one who has experienced this! Why I am the one being held accountable? Why am I the one getting "non-renewed?" This is bullshit!

Wait… how long has it been?

I have to get back in there… what do I look like? Well… they will know I was crying. Does it even matter? They had to have known that much when I ran out of the office.

Come on Chris… pull yourself together. You still have to teach! God! What kind of monster tells a teacher they are being fired… no, "non-renewed" in the middle of the goddamn day! How am I going to face my kids? They will know something is wrong.

How am I going to face my wife? Will my benefits hold out for the baby?

No… I can't think about that now. I have to get back in there. COME ON CHRIS! Snap out of it. You have to go back in…

[I returned to the principal's office where my assistant principal sat talking to the principal… my assistant principal was visually shaken. I could see that they had tears in their eyes. My entrance interrupted their conversation. There was a long awkward silence]

[…]

"I hope you realize how difficult this is for me… I hate having to do things like this."

How is this possible… are they lecturing me on how hard it is to "non-renew" me? This is unbelievable! I don't give a shit about your feelings… you clearly do not care about mine.

[I could barely listen to the principal's words as they performed their soliloquy on "how hard it is to be the bad guy."]

"Well… these are your options…"

Okay Chris, wake up… listen carefully… you have options.

"You can resign now and avoid this process, which can get ugly… you can wait for this to be reviewed by the school board to see if they will approve my recommendation, or you can fight this."

… fight… FIGHT! Chris, say something. If you think too long it won't matter what you say…

"I am not ready to leave."

My voice was weak. I realized this was the first thing I had said out loud since I left to sob in the bathroom. It can't end like this… not like this.

"Okay… I will prepare my recommendation. You will have a certain number of days to respond. Let me talk to central office to figure out what they would like me to do. I am not exactly sure how they do this here."

[I could see that my Assistant Principal was emotional, they were seated beside me… later they told me that they had no idea that the principal was going to make the recommendation to not renew my contract… I wanted to believe them… I needed to believe them.]

I floated down the hallway back to my classroom. I couldn't process anything… I retreated to my colleague's classroom (one of the choir directors). I had to tell someone… They took me into their music library, it was secluded, and attached to their office. They knew something was wrong, God only knows what I looked like after crying so hard.

"What is going on?"

I barely got the words out… "I am being fired."

"WHAT!?"

"The principal is recommending me for non-renewal."

"WHY!?"

"All of this financial stuff… it's all bullshit! I have done everything they told me to do… I am doing what I was trained to do… I am doing the same thing as everyone else, but I am the one that is getting fired! It's bullshit!"

They just stared at me… and then embraced me. I sobbed again. It felt good to be embraced. I needed the sympathy… I knew it wouldn't fix the problem, but I needed to know that someone cared.

I finally spoke: "I am sorry…"

"Why?"

"For coming in here during your class… I didn't mean to interrupt."

"Chris, don't apologize!"

[The bell rings.]

"Shit, I need to get to class."

"Are you going to be okay?"

"Yeah… I need to go teach. Thank you… I needed this."

"Of course! I am so sorry."

[I finished walking the rest of the hall way back to my classroom. The kids were already unpacking.]

"Hey Mr. Hanson…"

There was an obvious pause and awkwardness. I knew they could see I had been crying.

"Are you okay?"

"Oh yeah… I am fine. Let's get ready to play!"

I was consumed by procedure and routine: checking tuning, passing out music, daily announcements. I was home… I was teaching. This is my job… this is who I am. I am a teacher.

On my wall, in my office, behind my desk I had Freire's words taped to the wall. I sent them out at the beginning of every school year. It meant something different now…

> I am a teacher who stands up for what is right against what is indecent, who is in favor of freedom against authoritarianism, who is a supporter of authority against freedom with no limits, and who is a defender of democracy against the dictatorship of right or left. I am a teacher who favors the permanent struggle against every form of bigotry and against the economic domination of individuals and social classes. I am a teacher who rejects the present system of capitalism, responsible for the aberration of misery in the midst of plenty. I am a teacher full of the spirit of hope, in spite of all signs to the contrary. I am a teacher who refuses the disillusionment that consumes and immobilizes. I am a teacher proud of the beauty of my teaching practice, a fragile beauty that may disappear if I do not care for the struggle and knowledge that I ought to teach. If I do not struggle for the materials conditions without which my body will suffer from neglect, thus running the risk of becoming frustrated and ineffective, then I will no longer be the witness that I ought to be, no longer the tenacious fighter who may tire but who never gives up. This is a beauty that needs to be marveled at but that can easily slip away from me through arrogance or disdain toward my students. (Freire, 1998, pp.94-95)

Was this appropriate… I do not want to be some sort of martyr. All of these questions, allegations, confusion, and miscommunication. Someone had to be held accountable for the obvious problems… but why did it have to be me?

[…]

I went straight to my wife's office after work. I confronted her at her desk and immediately exclaimed "I need to talk to you," before she could express her enthusiasm for seeing me.

"Okay… what's up?"

"Can we go somewhere to talk?"

"You're scaring me… let's go in here."

We went into a small meeting room adjacent to her desk.

I told her… I don't remember the exact words I used… I just said it. It hurt to state it so succinctly.

"But I am going to fight it."

"Okay…"

She asked me several questions, none of which I could answer. There was so little that I knew or understood about the situation, and there was no handbook for being threatened with non-renewal as a teacher.

We went home and immediately began soliciting advice. I spent all evening on the phone talking to colleagues, friends, family, mentors… the conversations were always the same: "This doesn't make any sense!"

I knew I needed to get representation. I had no hopes of keeping my job if it would come down to my word, as a teacher, against the recommendation of a principal. The new superintendent brought them in to "clean house." The superintendent had worked for our principal as an assistant principal in the past. They had a relationship… trust… and understanding. I didn't stand a chance. No one did. Everyone was afraid of losing their job, as every stone that was lifted by the new administration exposed inconsistencies, misinformation, and errors that no one wanted credit for.

We were advised to connect with a teacher's union to receive legal counsel. I spent over an hour on the phone with a local representative. All of the unions were more expensive than we anticipated. We were getting ready to have a second child and finances were tight, but we did have some money in savings. I joined, paid my dues, and shared the letter of reprimand and my response (provided above) for my representative to review. I wish I could say I was comforted, but the entire process was unnerving to say the least. How had it come to this? The union representative, who happened to work in the district, did not seem surprised at all that I was going through this and seemed oddly prepared to deal with it all. I knew not to read too much into it, and I was grateful for the

representative's composure, but the whole conversation and experience of "building my case" to keep a job I was already frustrated with seemed counterintuitive.

[…]

In a casual interaction with the principal the next week as I was getting some papers signed, they mentioned that they were setting up a meeting with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction (who was a former band director and extremely interested in the arts programs in the district) to discuss "my situation."

The principal invited me to be a part of the conversation and told me they would let me know when it would take place. Without hesitation I said "thank you, but I will have to check with my legal counsel first before participating in any meetings pertaining to my recommendation for non-renewal."

My principal slowly pulled their head up from the papers they were signing on their desk and starred at me in amazement. There was a short but palpable pause before they spoke…

"May I offer you some advice?"

NO… I thought in my head.

"I would not do that if I were you."

I thought for a moment, trying to process the "advice." I wondered how sincere it was… if they had been in my position would they sincerely not have sought legal counsel form a teacher's union? I had very intense doubts. I had come to know my new principal as someone that frequently spoke their mind and acted on their opinions. On many occasions they would share "how much I reminded them of themselves as a young teacher." I never quite new if it was meant to be a compliment or an accusation. We had,

for whatever reason, developed an extremely close and personal relationship in the short time they had been there. I know it is one of the many reasons that the threat to non-renew me hurt so much. Now, in spite of everything that had transpired, they talked to me as if nothing had happened, and offered me advice, as if to protect me from the people that were trying to get rid of me… which was them.

I thanked them for the advice, but reiterated that my union representative had advised against any meetings without legal counsel. As I left the office, I was not quite sure if I had successfully moved my pawn on the chess board. Everything seemed more complicated now. The trust I had assumed was built between me and my new principal had been obliterated. I was paranoid. I questioned everyone and everything that was happening. My job had become hyper political (even more than it already was, which honestly did not seem possible). Who had the next move? Once again, I suffered from the constraints of the job as I rushed back to my room to finish some paperwork and emails before the bell rang for class. There was no time to think or process. Not that it would do much good. I was exhausted from talking about it with so many people and I was desperate to just teach.

[…]

At the end of the day I got a call from the principal to come to their office. This had become a regular occurrence and I genuinely thought nothing of it, although I chose to ignore that no one else seemed to be called to the principal's office as much as me. As I entered, I saw the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction talking with my principal. Although I had no logical reason to, I trusted them. Although I was surprised, I stood in the doorway confused and awaited an invitation to join them.

“Chris! Come in and sit down.” The principal gestured in a jovial way that further confused me.

The conversation began with a delicate review of the issues and concerns that had been articulated in the write up. The narrative the principal shared seemed somehow anecdotal as opposed to accusatory. I was bewildered.

My principal continually gestured to a manila file folder on their desk. It looked empty. I desperately wanted to reach across the desk and grab it , as its use as a prop became more and more obvious in the conversation that unfolded.

Suddenly, I was being showered with compliments for my work. I was praised for my creativity and resourcefulness in spite of the clear challenges I had faced. Furthermore, I was invited to recount my experience in the “audit” that had taken place over the previous three months. As I explained the series of events through my perspective, I was met with sympathy and understanding. Both the principal and assistant superintendent expressed their shock for the lack of continuity and policy in the finance policies for teachers that served as program coordinators and student activity club sponsors. I was simultaneously comforted by their enlightenment, but all at once frustrated that I was indicted to begin with, if they genuinely did not know that there was such a severe inconsistency between financial policy expectations and practices within the district and campus.

My confidence grew with a captive audience and I found myself caught up in venting my frustrations with institutional experiences from my six years in the district. I recognized that this was my opportunity to expose the hypocrisy of what was being expected of teachers and what was actually happening.

Their shock and awe was entertaining, but I so desperately wanted it to mean that my experiences were not in vain. Perhaps this was the moment of retribution!

We spoke for over an hour. At the end of the meeting the two administrators looked at each other with concernment before turning to me to say, “perhaps we need to move past this.”

They explained there were several things I brought up that needed to be addressed and the first priority was to train the teachers in the financial expectations the new administration had before we would be held accountable to such standards (which clearly did not already exist with continuity). The principal gestured to the manila folder again, and proclaimed “let’s forget about this.”

As the assistant superintendent left my principal leaned in to whisper “walk them to their car.” I followed the assistant superintendent out of the building and continued a relatively casual conversation that would solidify our newly formed relationship and express my gratitude for what I perceived as their benevolence toward me and my situation.

As I returned to my principal’s office, they exhaled and proclaimed “I am so grateful we were able to do that!” Again, my gratitude was transformed to confusion. Why was the principal that had decided to recommend me for non-renewal grateful to meet with the assistant superintendent for a meeting they called to vindicate me from the accusations they solicited and upheld? Given the complexity of my personal and professional situation I could not help but concede and respond with my own sigh of relief.

Although I left the principal's office grateful that the recommendation for non-renewal would not be submitted… I could not help but wonder if the folder was empty. The relief that I was experiencing, knowing that I would be allowed to keep my job, with my second child due to arrive in less than a month, was complicated by the fact that I had fought to keep a position that I had previously recognized was toxic for my mental, emotional, and physical health. Furthermore, any sense of agency I had developed in defending myself and had been taken away by the grace extended to me by my accusers. I began to wonder if I was developing Stockholm syndrome. Was our meeting a personal triumph, or a calculated counter move by my opponent in a game I consented to play in my own naivete? I aggressively suppressed such notions to celebrate my continued employment with my spouse and family who carried an equal if not greater burden through the same experience.

I walked back to my classroom to gather my things as I called my wife to share the "good news."

"I am safe," I thought… "for now."

Artifact #10 - Formal T-TESS Evaluation (2017-2018)

Table 2 represents a summary of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) summative assessment that I received at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. The assessment was completed by my high school principal. T-TESS was developed to replace previous teacher evaluation systems (like the PDAS system referenced in chapter 4) and serves as a "growth-oriented" model of teacher assessment that "support[s] teachers and promote[s] specific and targeted feedback, which results in improvement of [teacher] practice" (Texas Education Agency, 2016, p.4).

> The T-TESS rubric contains five performance levels – Distinguished, Accomplished, Proficient, Developing, and Improvement Needed. Appraisers anchor ratings in Proficient until the evidence pulls the rating to another level. Unlike PDAS, the Proficient performance level in T-TESS contains strong teaching practices; a campus filled with Proficient teachers is indicative of a high-functioning campus. The teacher steering committee that developed the T-TESS rubric wanted to ensure that this rubric was a growth tool. In order for that to occur, the ceiling (Distinguished) had to be a very lofty measure that captured what all teachers strive toward but very few teachers consistently attain. (Texas Education Agency, 2016, p.29)

A study conducted by Lazarev, Newman, Nguyen, Lin, and Zacamy in 2017 confirmed the statistical viability and effectiveness of T-TESS and identified a bell-curve in the performance levels of teachers that were assessed during the pilot year of the T-TESS rubric in the 2014-2015 school year. The study found that a majority of teachers (68%) were rated as "proficient," a quarter (25%) of teachers were rated as "developing or in need of improvement," and a relatively small number of teachers (less than 5%) received an accomplished or a distinguished rating (p.i). A detailed description of the four domains that are assessed using T-TESS and the performance levels indicated in Table 2 is available in Appendix E.

Table 2 Summary of T-Tess Assessment (2017-2018)	
DOMAIN 2: Planning	
Dimension 1.1 Standard and Alignment	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 1.2 Data and Assessment	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 1.3 Knowledge of Students	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 1.4 Activities	DISTINGUISHED
Domain 1: Comments and Feedback - teacher provides rigorous goals that are aligned with the state standards - formal and informal assessments occur daily with consistent feedback to students - his knowledge of his students is exemplary - the teacher uses high order thinking and problem solving to allow his students to grow and provides rigor for all regardless of their abilities	
DOMAIN 2: Instruction	

Dimension 2.1 Achieving Expectations	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 2.3 Communication	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 2.4 Differentiation	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 2.5 Monitor and Adjust	ACCOMPLISHED
Domain 2: Comments and Feedback - the teacher provides opportunities for his students to self-monitor and works with each student to set goals - he has extensive content knowledge and provides many opportunities for his students to use their skills to be able to perform in the community and or venues	
DOMAIN 3: Learning Environment	
Dimension 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 3.2 Managing Student Behavior	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 3.3 Classroom Culture	DISTINGUISHED
Domain 3: Comments and Feedback - class routines are established and students are aware of the expectations for behavior - teacher consistently monitors and encourages all students regardless of ability - provides engaging and exciting lessons and opportunities for students	
Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities	
Dimension 4.1 Professional Demeanor and Ethics	PROFICIENT
Dimension 4.2 Goal Setting	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 4.3 Professional Development	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 4.4 School Community Involvement	DISTINGUISHED
Domain 4: Comments and Feedback - the teacher behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics - the teacher advocates for his students - teacher is consistently setting short and long term goals - the teacher actively participates in all school activities - parents are contacted on a regular basis to inform of student progress	

Academic Accountability

Artifact #11 - Letters of Reprimand: "A Documented Problem"

Memo to: [Teacher]
Through: [High School Principal]
From: [High School Assistant Principal]
Date: March 23rd, 2017
RE: Letter of Reprimand

Grades are due on Wednesday, March 22nd by 1:00pm. Several emails were sent out reminding teachers of the date and time. On Wednesday, March 22nd at approximately noon you began looking for me to tell me that you would not have all of your grades entered by the deadline, specifically your Music Appreciation and Pre-AP/AP Music Theory classes. When you were unable to find me, you spoke to [another Assistant Principal] who directed you to at least give each student an "I" rather than penalize them for your failure to complete grading by the expected deadline.

I spoke to you on Thursday, March 23rd regarding this event. At that time, I informed you that I would be issuing a reprimand for this repeated infraction. You shared with me the difficulty you were having with students turning in work even though a contract had been signed in January explaining your new late-work policies. I reminded you that several conversations had transpired and suggestions been shared between you and I regarding how to ensure that your classroom practices did not prohibit you from being able to meet grading expectations for this campus. Nonetheless you have only met all campus grading expectations for one grading period this entire school year.

As follow-up to the issue cited above, this will serve as an official letter of reprimand for your actions. You are directed to adhere to the following statements as official directives when performing your duties with respect to communicating with parents and grading while providing feedback to meet the expectations for a teacher at [the High School].

These directives are now being issued for the second time.

1. You are directed to turn in all grades by the requested deadline for each grading period.
2. You are directed to assign the correct number of grades for all courses for each grading period.
3. You are directed to record 1-2 grades weekly for each class.
4. You are directed to use only number grades or an "I" as appropriate.
5. You are directed to reconcile any "I"s given by the appropriate deadline using the appropriate paperwork and process within the acceptable time period.

I am confident you understand the importance of complying with the directives mentioned above. Failure to follow these directives may result in further personnel action. If you do not fully understand these directives or what is expected of you, please notify me immediately.

If you disagree with the contents of this memorandum, you may submit a written response to me within ten working days of your dated signature. Your signature on this memorandum does not indicate you agree with its content. Your signature only indicates that you received a copy of this memorandum.

[Teacher Signature]
Date of signature: 3/24/2017

Date: January 10, 2019
To: [Teacher]
From: [High School Assistant Principal]
RE: Letter of Reprimand and Directives

On December 20, 2018, I was informed that you had not submitted your grades per campus and district expectations. I had been told by the campus registrar's office that they had spoken with you and you stated that you were not going to be able to enter your grades. You had afternoon activities scheduled for your students that conflicted with campus expectations. These expectations were relayed to all faculty by email on December 14, 2018 and a reminder email on December 18, 2018. Grading expectations have also been addressed during recent faculty meetings.

I contacted you at approximately 5:30pm. You stated that you were in your [classroom]. I informed you that your grades had not been entered per the 1:00pm deadline to finalize and enter all grades. You informed me that you would not be able to comply with the expectation because you were "conducting a rehearsal until 6:00pm and then having a party for your students from 6:00pm to 8:00pm." I asked why you would schedule a rehearsal and party when you should be working on finalizing grades. You stated that "it was not on the district calendar." I discussed with you the emails that had been sent to inform and remind all staff. Your response was "If you have to write me up, then write me up." You stated that you "had a rehearsal and party and could not comply with the expectation." You and I discussed the expectation in detail and you stated that you would have the grades entered but it would not be until after the evening's events.

At approximately 12:25am, I received a call from you stating that you had completed the task of entering your grades.

In order to establish the proper procedures, you are directed to comply with the following:

- You are to uphold all school and district expectations to include entering grades into the district's grading program on or before the posted deadlines.
- You are directed not to schedule activities prior to grading deadlines to avoid conflicts. All activities during a "dead period" are to be approved by the campus principal.

In the future, it is expected and required that you follow all district and campus policies, guidelines, and procedures. Failure to comply with these directives may result in additional disciplinary consequences.

I understand my signature does not necessarily indicate that I agree with the contents. I understand that I may respond to this memorandum in writing within ten working days.

Signed [High School Assistant Principal]

Signed [Teacher]

CC: [High School Principal] and [Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction]

Narrative #2 - "Some Advice"

Staring at the clock at three in the morning surrounded by ungraded work I could not help but ask "what is wrong with me?"

How many times do I have to find myself in this situation… how many times to do I have to be written up? I hate this! I hate pulling all-nighters to get student work graded. I hate that my students are not getting feedback on their work. This is not what assessment is for. I have failed to hold them accountable to what they should be learning, and I have failed to provide timely feedback to help them learn.

Then again, I can't grade work that is not turned in. I wonder how much of this is late work. I "excuse myself" from grading when not everyone turns in their work at the same time so I can "grade it all at once." But I know this to be an excuse. Do I deserve the luxury of grading work only once? How can I be so selfish? If it takes a student two additional weeks to complete an assignment, but they complete it, doesn't it still need to be assessed? Doesn't the student still deserve feedback? Are they really learning if I haven't provided this feedback to them? Not to mention the students that have turned in their work on time! They should have received feedback from me already, and yet I keep them from getting what they deserve because of the excuses I make for myself and their peers. There has to be a better way…

I feel trapped. I still remember being called into the principal's office the first year that I taught music theory and music appreciation…

"How is it possible that so many students failed your class?!" they yelled.

"I don't know… I am asking myself the same question."

The conversation did not include a review of my syllabus or instructional practices and assessment strategies… it was not a trial… I was already guilty. If my students fail, I did not teach them well enough. If they did not turn in the assignment, I did not provide a reasonable amount of time to complete it. If they did not understand, it was because I had not asked the right questions… I knew these things to not be true, at least in the sense that no one can speak definitively about teaching and learning. There is so much context that is needed to truly understand any teacher, student, or classroom. Of course, by not meeting campus expectations, I had somehow waived my right to explain my actions and to request sympathy from my administrators.

Being a "good teacher" was simply not *good enough* if you could not meet institutional expectations. I was just as exhausted hearing that as they were exhausted saying it: "It just doesn't make sense Chris… I know you are a great teacher, but you have to turn your grades in on time!" I was beginning to think the opposite. I felt I was a good teacher because I did *not* turn my grades in on time. I wanted my gradebook to reflect the learning that was happening in my class. From my perspective, this was not possible with the expectations they set for the campus. I recalled previous faculty meetings where they explained that we should be using "every day as an opportunity for instruction," discouraging and chastising teachers that offered "free days" (that is, free from instruction and arguable free from learning) on days after summative assessments, or in the last week of a grading period. Yet, campus expectations dictated that all grades be submitted by the dismissal bell on the last day of classes for each semester. Several teachers raised concerns about such a directive. In short, if we were expected to offer instruction and engage students, shouldn't we offer feedback and some form of

assessment? Several teachers mentioned that students lacked motivation to complete assignments that they knew would not be graded. I asked at one point "how are we supposed to offer meaningful instruction and assessment for our students until the last day of class when grades are due when the bell rings?" You could see the faculty sit up in their chairs and crane their necks attentively for a response. The administrators, squirming, proclaimed "I am not going to tell you how to teach your class… it will look different for everyone." After an audible rejection of the response the conversation moved on with the expectations clearly hanging in the air. It would seem, yet again, if there were no complaints (in this case from the students) then the problem didn't exist. It was quite literally impossible to monitor every classroom throughout the day, and unless a student complained about not having anything productive or engaging to do on the last day, there was no question as to what took place the last week of a grading period.

The system was clearly broken. Dedicated to the data: the number and frequency of assessments posted in the gradebook were more important than the subject and content matter being taught, let alone student ability and aptitude. It was easy to monitor who had turned in their grades by the posted deadline… it was much more difficult to appreciate what was being turned in. No one seemed to care if the grades that teachers submitted actually reflected the students learning. As long as the student was not failing and the grades were submitted on time, there was not a problem. Shortly after the new assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction had begun, the fine arts teachers were chastised at the end of a faculty meeting for "dumping grades" and giving "blanket 100s" for participation. We were told that this would not be tolerated. Yet, my colleagues consistently vented and celebrated sitting at their computers pumping in 100s at the end

of a grading period for participation. Exclaiming after a department meeting "oh crap, I need to do my grades!" Only to emerge from their office 15 minutes later to report "I am glad I got that done." At one point, I cautiously raised my concerns with administration and relayed what I believed to be happening… I was met with what became a standard response to my inquiries of inequality and inconsistency in teaching, learning, and assessment in the arts: "That is not good… well, I am glad *you* are doing it the right way Chris. That is why you are such a great teacher." No investigation, no write-ups, no questions… perhaps because their grades were turned in on time.

I remember, when I taught middle school, the principal stated quite bluntly, "students don't fail orchestra." Without hesitating I retorted "well, if you look at my gradebook you would know that's not true."

What were we holding ourselves accountable to? Deadlines or learning? I recognized that this was an arrogant question to ask, and one that I would most likely not ponder if I had in fact turned my grades in on time. I had to be honest with myself. I was not in compliance. I did not respond to my write ups regarding the submission of my grades because I *knew* I had not done what was expected of me. Furthermore, I knew I was not doing what was needed for my students. They deserved feedback on their assessments. And I was not giving it to them in a timely manner.

However, it struck me that no one ever genuinely asked *why* I wasn't turning in my grades. I was questioned of course, and chastised by administrators that would challenge me before writing me up "why did you not submit your grades on time?" But they never accepted my response and never sought to support me in the concerns I expressed for our systems of assessment and grading expectations. I had emailed my

assistant principal (who I knew was drowning in administrative duties) at least three times one semester to discuss issues with students not turning in their work. We discussed countless strategies, which I tried, with no sustainable results. Students were simply not turning in work. Remarkably, engagement in class was high. Learning was evident through informal assessments. But formal assessments simply did not have enough value in their minds to be completed and turned in on time. Ironically, I could see myself in my student's apparent apathy… why write the essay if the dialog in class is so much richer? Why do the work if I do not need the credit for the class? Why invest in the system, when I know it is broken?... why turn in the grades on time, if they don't mean anything?

I thought often of Rancière's work on teaching and learning in this time. "Man is a will served by an intelligence… where need ceases, intelligence slumbers" (Rancière, 1991, p.51). In other words, if the students had no desire to do the work, if there was not will to complete it, or to learn… more importantly, if they saw no need for the activity, there was no hope of learning. I knew this to be true. I saw it… I experienced it!

I thought too often of my own experiences in grade school, barely passing classes because I knew exactly how to pass the tests, and yet I never turned in course work. It meant nothing to me, and the teacher had no intention of making the work meaningful to me. If anything, I was seen as "lesser than others" because I lacked the intellectual curiosity that my peers seemed to exhibit. I understand this as my teacher's perception, rather than a truth of my ability, because I know so few of us were actually learning. Those that were labeled as "successful" were simply fulfilling their desire to succeed.

They were never concerned with the potential to learn, merely the potential to earn a higher grade point average than their competition.

And here I am again, the cynic. Projecting my experiences on others and generalizing to protect my own insecurities as an educator. How do I get them to *want* to learn? Who can answer this question? I know the pedagogy… and for what I do not know, I compensate with pedagogical imagination and creativity. I am confident in my ability to accommodate and differentiate instruction… but I cannot inspire someone to learn that has no desire to do so. This is my greatest challenge as an educator. Not, turning in my grades on time, but rather, not having work to grade at all.

Such philosophical musings have no space in the systems of accountability public school teachers have to navigate. From my experience and perspective, the deadlines and data consistently trump intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. I know I am not alone. Every educator I spoke with on campus, everyone I sought advice from shared my sentiment… "but you still have to turn your grades in on time Chris!"
"Then how do we break the cycle?" I would ask.

I am perpetuating the problem by functioning in the system. I am reminded of Patti Lather's *Doubled Science* (2012). It was almost impossible to change the system from within… I had to break the cycle. Yet, I struggle to identify the real problem. Was I so arrogant to think that my lack of organization or discipline was somehow a heroic act to expose the failings of our system of grading and assessing student learning? I was afraid to admit that such a question was not rhetorical… I knew the answer. I was arrogant enough to think this, and afraid to accept my own failings.

I *could* grade the work that was turned in on time, and also modify assessments to make them more accessible. I *could* simplify the assessments to make them easier to grade, or I could assess my students solely on participation and impregnate my grade book with superfluous 100s. Arguably, it would make everything easier and everyone happier. But would any of this actual solve my problems?

[…]

One of my students came to my office one day during lunch to ask if they could retest on a performance assessment to help their grade. I could see that they were quite upset. "You have a 90 average in the class. You did really well on the assessment, I am happy to give you some specific feedback and have you retest, but you received an 87, I was pleased with your progress… this is not easy music."

"I know," they said… "but I really need to get above a 95 in this class to keep my class rank… [they paused and struggled to hold back their emotions.]

"What is going on?" I asked.

"I just feel… I just feel like…" [they struggled to criticize me or the course out of respect. I was grateful but concerned for the obvious frustration and anxiety the student was experiencing because of me and my class.]

"I just feel like I am being punished for choosing to be in orchestra."

"What do you mean?" I was absolutely terrified to hear one of my students say this… especially a student that I had taught since middle school and cherished to have in my program. How long had they felt like this? Why were they feeling this way?

"I mean, I am so grateful for you as a teacher… I am grateful that you do not just give us 100s, you really grade us and give us meaningful feedback with the playing tests… but…

everyone in band and choir just gets 100s, which boosts their GPA and helps their rank. I feel like I have to work so much harder to earn my grade in orchestra, and it just doesn't seem fair."

So much of what my student said was true. Whether it was an issue of "fairness" was debatable, but there was a clear inequity in how my students were assessed in comparison to my colleagues. To be clear, this has little to do with comparative justice in grading and assessment strategies for the arts at my high school. I did not need to know (nor did I want the reputation) that my class was "harder" or that I "actually graded" as some sort of a moral trophy. I was concerned with the articulated expectations and practices for grading and assessment that were so clearly problematic and inconsistent across campus.

I remember talking to one of my colleagues, a veteran teacher, with more than fifteen years of experience. I taught their child in the orchestra program. They served as a parent volunteer and later as a booster officer. They were respected, and they were seldom "in trouble like me." I sought their advice about grading and assessment because I genuinely wanted it.

"I don't know what to do… I have so many students failing the class because they don't turn their work in. They claim they don't understand it, but I am reviewing in every class and no one is coming to tutorials. They are simply not doing the work! I then find myself accepting an avalanche of late work before the grading period ends to make sure they won't fail and lose eligibility. How do you deal with it? Are you not having the same issues? How do you get your students to turn in the work on time?"

I stood in silence as I received the response…

“Man, Chris, you are way too hard on yourself. Everyone is dealing with this. When you know it is going to screw up your grade book, just make it up! No one is going to check your grades if everyone is passing and your grades are turned in on time. You are setting yourself up for the scrutiny you are getting.”

This was not my solution, but it was clearly an answer for many people at our campus.

[The baby starts to cry]

“Honey, what are you still doing up? Its three thirty in the morning.”

“I know, sorry my love, I just need to finish grading. I was going to get the baby, I just wanted to finish this stack.”

“No, it’s okay, I’ll get him… but you need to get some sleep. Are you going to work tomorrow?”

“Yeah, I have to… we have rehearsal after school tomorrow.”

“So we won’t see you until late again?”

“Yeah, I should be home around seven.”

Artifact #12 - Letter of Reprimand: “Wasted Resources”

Memo to: [Teacher]
Through: [High School Principal]
From: [High School Assistant Principal]
Date: March 9th, 2017
RE: Letter of Reprimand

On Monday, March 6th, 2017 you traveled to UIL orchestra competition in San Antonio. Due to the rules not being followed in selecting music to perform in the competition, the [High School] orchestra was disqualified.
On Tuesday, March 7th 2017, you traveled to UIL orchestra competition in San Antonio. Again, after performing, the [High School] orchestra was disqualified for failure to comply with competition rules.
As a follow-up to the issues cited above, this will serve as an official letter of reprimand for your actions. You are directed to adhere to the following statements as official directives when performing your duties with respect to communicating with parents and

grading while providing feedback to meet the expectations for a teacher at [this High School].

1) Read, understand and adhere to all UIL rules for competition.
2) Demonstrate stewardship in all aspects of the use of funds for program expenses, i.e. participation in the UIL competition without regard to contest rules resulting in wasted resources.

I am confident you understand the importance of complying with the directives mentioned above. Failure to follow these directives may result in further personnel action. If you do not fully understand these directives or what is expected of you, please notify me immediately.

If you disagree with the contents of this memorandum, you may submit a written response to me within ten working days of your dated signature. Your signature on this memorandum does not indicate you agree with its content. Your signature only indicates that you received a copy of this memorandum.

[Teacher Signature]
Date of signature: 3/24/2017

Narrative #3 - Expectations

It was the infamous "contest season" for the fine and performing arts programs in Texas. I would be taking four different orchestras to the annual UIL Concert and Sight Reading contest. This year I was particularly proud of the program. The band director was supportive and tolerated my excitement and passion for symphony orchestra. I loved collaborating with the band! I despised being siloed within the public school system into band, choir, and orchestra. I sought every opportunity to collaborate, especially with my colleagues and their students, and this was a unique time in the year when we had the chance to make music together.

We prepared an all-Russian program. We studied the socio-historical aspects of late-romantic and twentieth century Eastern European composers. The band directors worked with me to clinic the ensemble, particularly the winds and percussion. It was a phenomenal program, and the students worked tirelessly to master the music. I was honored to make music with them and share their work with my regional colleagues.

…

As the students packed up their instruments and walked back to the bus, I began the ritual walk to the contest office to collect our scores, sheet music, and judges' sheets. As I entered the room, it was obvious that I had walked into a conversation that I was not welcome to. I asked if I should wait outside and one of my colleagues from another high school in our region quickly left and intentionally avoided any eye contact. The region secretary, responsible for running the contest, began complaining "I can't be responsible for everything, it is your responsibility to check these things, I hate to be the bad guy, it is just the way it is, you're supposed to check these things before you enter the contest." I was visibly confused as they shuffled around looking for our judges' sheets and sheet music.

I waited patiently as they gathered our paperwork…

"I have to disqualify you."

"What?!"

"The contest rules clearly state that you are not allowed to play more than one piece by the same composer. You choose two different movements by the same composer. There is nothing I can do."

"Wait… I do not understand. I submitted our repertoire list over a month ago and no one said anything. All three judges evaluated our performance and didn't say anything. I had our group cliniced by my colleagues and no one said anything…"

I suddenly realized why my colleague from the other high school was so eager to leave the contest office.

“You have to pay attention to the rules, they are published for everyone to read, I can’t catch everything, that is your responsibility.”

“Okay…” I immediately realized there was no use in debating. The decision had been made before I entered the room. I was frustrated, confused, and angry all at once. I did my best to deliver the news to my students without venting my emotions. The bus ride to lunch and then to school was riddled with speculations, disdain, and disappointment.

We returned to the school and I spent most of the afternoon reliving the experience as I told my colleagues what had transpired. I was consistently met with “that is crazy… I can’t believe no one caught that until after the performance… I am so sorry that happened.”

The next day, I returned to the contest with another group. This was our sub-non-varsity string ensemble. There was an obvious tension in the air when we arrived and prepared to perform on stage. I knew everyone had been talking about what had happened the day before. I could sense their questions “How could he not have known? Hasn’t he read the rules?” As the students loaded the bus, I returned to the contest office… a ritual I was too familiar with having participated in UIL events two to three times a year for over five years.

“Well… I have never had to do this to the same school at the same contest…”

“What?”

“I have to disqualify your group today. They performed on stage without a piano and your score clearly requires a piano.”

“What?! No, the piano part is optional.”

“But it is not published with those words in the score. It has to be indicated in the score that way. I am sorry.”

I stayed in the office for over 40 minutes advocating for my students and arguing over the ambiguity of the published music and the contest rules. In the end, there was little that could be done.

The students, surprisingly, received the news quite well. As if the news from the day before had quickly established an unwarranted expectation for our school to be disqualified. I had felt like a pariah in our district for years. We were the youngest and smallest high school program. The region was filled with orchestral juggernauts with impressive legacies. Although the contest was evaluated with a rubric and not competitive between schools, results were published publicly and always compared. Our disqualifications were quickly a topic of conversation across the region.

I returned to the contest two more times with our last two ensembles, who I am grateful to say were not disqualified. Needless to say, the contest season did not go the way I or my students had hoped. We all processed the events with humility and spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on our experiences.

It was not long before I was called to the principal’s office. I would return multiple times over the week as news of our disqualification traveled from one administrator to the next and further clarification was requested on exactly how and why our groups were disqualified and what role I played in the debacle. Initially, I was met with what I thought was genuine sympathy. I explained my experience in the situation, without offering excuses, and received an appropriate amount of disappointment and condolences. By the end of the week, however, the entire situation had escalated. The

principal was increasingly frustrated and began asking my students about their experiences at the contest after we received news of our disqualification.

The principal and I had previously had long conversations about UIL and my contempt for the competitive nature of the performing arts in Texas (referenced in chapter 4). In our conversations, my principal made it very clear that they "wanted trophies." They also shared their opinion that it was weird that I did not agree with their sentiment and expectations. "Don't you want your students to be successful?" they asked.

"Of course I do! But there are more ways to experience success than with a trophy."

"Oh, don't give me that bull crap. You really believe that… that is just what people who can't win say to make themselves feel better."

"… as we have discussed, this is *not* a competitive event. We perform and are assessed individually."

"The hell it isn't! When our superintendent speaks with his peers and has to explain why their orchestras are getting disqualified, then it's competitive."

"Well," I said begrudgingly, "that's not my fault."

"It most certainly is!"

I recognized very quickly, that my response to the entire situation was what was ultimately aggravating my principal, more than the disqualifications. I did my best to mediate the complexities of the situation, in terms of curricular versus the cultural expectations of UIL for performing arts ensembles in Texas.

"I don't want to hear that crap… I just need you to answer these questions: Did you or did you not tell your students that getting disqualified was not a big deal?"

"Well…"

“Yes or no! Did you tell them it wasn’t a big deal? Because it is!”

“We talked about what happened and I always tell them that whatever happens on the stage I expect them to do their best and share what they have worked on…”

“NO! That is not what I am talking about. You are undermining this whole thing in front of your students and it’s not okay. Tell me… and I want an honest answer… did you intentionally disqualify your students to prove some kind of point?”

“WHAT?! NO! How could you think I would do that?!”

“I don’t know anymore Chris. I really don’t… I have never dealt with something like this. I know how you feel about UIL…”

“But I would NEVER sacrifice my students’ welfare to prove a point! How could you think that of me? UIL isn’t what defines the success of our program…”

“Well it is at this high school, and I know I have made that point very clear.”

“UIL is a snapshot, it is no better than a standardized test…”

“You’re right, but just like the standardized tests, whether we like it or not, we are judged by the results.”

“And you’re okay with that?”

“That’s not the point Chris! You either do your job or you don’t, and right now… I don’t see you doing your job.”

“Clearly we have very different definitions of what my job is then.”

“Ya think!?”

I can’t help but draw the parallel to my experiences with grading and assessment described in Narrative #2. Upholding the system of assessment we inherited was clearly more important than serving the students. Too much relied on UIL in terms of

expectations and perceptions of "success." To question it would simply bring the entire system under scrutiny, and there were too many people who were successful within the system and that would not know what success could look like without it, to justify questioning it. As Biesta (2010) explains it, "[it is in the] interest of those who benefit from the status quo to keep things as they are rather than to open up discussion about what education might be or become" (p.16).

As I continually came to realize, any sense of agency that I believed I had in my classroom was quickly and easily challenged by hegemonic structures of assessment and accountability. I recognized how shallow others' understandings were of the performing arts. How could someone view us as successful without trophies? I saw it as a kind of *academic apathy*. It was easy to look at the trophy case to evaluate a program's effectiveness. It was much harder to invest in the teacher, the students, and the classroom to understand *what* they were doing as opposed to *how well* they did it. I do not say this to diminish the concept of assessment, but to simply challenge our understanding of success and accountability for teachers and students in the arts. As Bruce Cameron (1963) wisely proclaimed, "Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted" (p.13). Biesta (2010) refers to it as the *normative validity* of our measurements. He explains, "the question [is] whether we are indeed measuring what we value, or whether we are measuring what we can easily measure and thus end up valuing what we (can) measure" (p.13). Who better to teach us this than the arts?

Artifact #13 - Formal T-TESS Evaluation (2018-2019)

Table 3 represents a summary of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) summative assessment that I received at the end of the 2018-2019

academic year. The assessment was completed by my high school assistant principal. A detailed description of the four domains that are assessed using T-TESS and the performance levels indicated in Table 3 is available in Appendix F.

Table 3 Summary of T-Tess Assessment (2018-2019)	
DOMAIN 1: Planning	
Dimension 1.1 Standard and Alignment	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 1.2 Data and Assessment	PROFICIENT
Dimension 1.3 Knowledge of Students	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 1.4 Activities	DISTINGUISHED
Domain 1: Comments and Feedback **TEK(S):** The lesson should cover all four strands of the Performing Arts TEKS (Critical Evaluation, Creative Expression and Response, Historical and Cultural Relevance, and Foundations (Music Literacy)). I included a link to the CEDFA website that provides additional details on how the performing arts TEKS are designed and implemented. Let me know if you have any questions. **Learning Objective:** "The student will demonstrate foundational music skills in literacy and performance, in the process of learning through performance of prescribed repertoire." **Language Objective:** "Students will write a reflection (CE & R) in their journals to the following prompt: Write a description of the (designated piece) using similes and metaphors." **Essential Question:** "What techniques do I use to realize my literary description of the piece we are working on?" **Exit Ticket/Closing Task:** Students will perform a self-evaluation to determine if their literary description, or that of their peers, for the designated piece of music was realized in their performance.	
DOMAIN 2: Instruction	
Dimension 2.1 Achieving Expectations	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 2.3 Communication	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 2.4 Differentiation	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 2.5 Monitor and Adjust	DISTINGUISHED
Domain 2: Comments and Feedback **TEACHER:** At the beginning of the observation period, the teacher was moving about the classroom talking with students and addressing any needs that they may have in preparation for the day's lesson. The students entered into the classroom and taking their places at their seats with their instruments. As the bell rung, the teacher moved	

into their power zone at the podium and gave instructions on the lesson and agenda for the day. The teacher then a student leader continue with the announcements and other housing keeping duties of the class. The teacher then began the instruction of for the day by informing students that "Today is...Students respond..."Writing Wednesday!" The students that had not done so, picked up their journals in preparation for the lesson. The teacher then gave them their writing prompt..."Tell me what are similes and metaphors used for? He held a brief discussion and then had the students think about it for a few minutes. He then led a discussion on the prompt. The teacher then led the students to "think about the 3rd movement" and then write about it. He gave them the instruction to think first then write. A 5 minute time limit was given. The teacher walked about the classroom while students wrote. At the end of the 5 minutes, the teacher had the students report out what they wrote. He then led them through a brief discussion on their writings. The teacher then had students discuss, listen, and imagine the musical piece played in major vs minor. He led the students through their own assessment and discussion of the piece. The teacher challenged the students to play in an "endearing" manner..."play it like you broke your favorite toy." He told the students that "the director will challenge you by using similes and metaphors." The teacher provided similar opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves through various questioning strategies and assessment opportunities guided by the teacher through these activities.

STUDENTS: As the students entered the classroom, they were greeted by the teacher in preparation for class. They went and began taking their seats with their instruments. The teacher asked a student leader to begin announcements and lesson expectations at the bell, the students all became attentive and followed along with the instructions. The teacher then began instruction and students participated actively in instruction and discussion The students were able to follow along with the instruction as the teacher led them through a series of questioning and assessments of each passage played. The students all participated in the discussion and were able to give input on each question or assessment. There were very little to no redirection for discipline infractions during the observation period.

DOMAIN 3: Learning Environment	
Dimension 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures	DISTINGUISHED
Dimension 3.2 Managing Student Behavior	ACCOMPLISHED
Dimension 3.3 Classroom Culture	DISTINGUISHED

Domain 3: Comments and Feedback

The teacher had established and used effective routines, transitions and procedures that he and the students implemented effortlessly. The students took responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. The classroom was safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students. The teacher consistently engaged his students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests and abilities to create a positive rapport amongst students. The students collaborate positively and encourage each other’s efforts and achievements.

Professional Accountability

Artifact #14 - Memo to File and Directives

Date: August 7, 218
To: [Teacher]
From: [High School Assistant Principal]
RE: Memo to File and Directives
On August 7, 2018, I was informed that on July 23rd, 2018 you held an orchestra student officer's meeting to discuss an upcoming orchestra overnight trip. I was informed that during this meeting, you discussed private information concerning students' gender preference in regards to sleeping arrangements on the overnight trip in violation of the Educators' Code of Ethics.

- Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. DH (Exhibit)

In order to establish proper procedures, you are directed to complete the following:

- You are directed to refrain from discussing student personal information with any other student.
- You are directed to uphold all school and district expectations and policies.

In the future, it is expected and required that you follow all district and campus policies, guidelines, and procedures. Failure to comply with these directives may result in additional disciplinary consequences.
I understand my signature does not necessarily indicate that I agree with the contents. I understand that I may respond to this memorandum in writing within ten working days.

Signed [High School Assistant Principal]

Signed [Teacher]

CC: [High School Principal]

Artifact #15 - Formal Response to Memo to File and Directives

Date: August 18, 2018
To: [High School Assistant Principal]
From: [Teacher]
RE: Formal response to "Memo to File and Directives" dates August 7, 2018

On Wednesday, August 8, 2018, I received a "Memo to File and Directives" from you regarding a situation pertaining to the housing of transgender students at the annual [High School] Orchestra Boot Camp. The memo claims that I "discussed private information concerning students' gender preference in regard to sleeping arrangements on the overnight trip in violation of the Educators Code of Ethics (Standard 3.1)".
This claim is patently false. As I am sure you are aware, there is an evolving controversy surrounding he rights of LGBTQIA students in the United States, particularly in Texas.

Put simply, there is an ongoing conversation on equity and access in public schooling that is troubled by the modern challenges of human and civil rights associated with the LGBTQIA community.

The dialog that is referenced in the memo regarding the housing of transgender students at the [High School] Orchestra Boot Camp involved the elected student leaders of the [High School] Orchestra and myself. The dialog did not pertain to personal identifiers of individual students. It did, however, deal with a new policy to be implemented at the [High School] Boot Camp that would require transgender students in the [High School] Orchestra program to room in a separate cabin form the established "Boys" (or male) and "Girls" (or female) cabins. When this policy was communicated with me, it was given as a directive that "if the transgender students choose to attend the camp they would have to room in a separate cabin". I immediately questioned the legality and ethicality of such a policy that clearly segregates transgender students that obtain a clear gender identity as either male or female. The directive was reiterated and I was told that if the students did not feel comfortable with the policy they were not required to attend the event and could simply elect not to participate.

Understanding that this would have dramatic social consequences on the students and ultimately the program, I engaged the elected student officers of the [High School Orchestra program to determine whether they would feel comfortable traveling with and adhering to such a policy. The dialog that ensued (between the student officers and myself) dealt specifically with the policy and not individual students, thus negating any claim that I divulged "private information" of one student to another.

Furthermore, standard 3.1 states, "The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purpose or required by law." It is my opinion that this dialog was necessary on the premise that upholding a policy that segregated transgender students would be in direct violation to both state and federal laws on equal access in education. I have attached several documents that expound upon this topic and will hopefully aid, in the rights and subsequent policies affecting our LGBTQIA student community. (The following documents are attached to the e-mail containing this letter: "Dear Colleague" Letter Withdrawing Previous Guidance on Transgender Students (Feb. 22, 2017); "Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students" (May 13, 2016); and "Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Coordinators" (April 24, 2015), accompanied by a letter to Title IX coordinators and a Title IX resources guide. All documents and more can be found at https://www.2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/lgbt.html)

In closing, I would like to cite both standard 3.2 and standard 3.4 as evidence that the dialog that I engaged in with my students was not only necessary but also fully upheld by the Educators Code of Ethics that it has been claimed I violated.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

I appreciate your time and consideration of what I have detailed in this letter and I look forward to promoting further conversation on the topics addressed within it.
Earnestly,

[Teacher]

CC: [High School Principal]

Silence

No further conversations nor correspondence took place pertaining to the contents and subject matter of the letter of reprimand dated August 7, 2018 or my response. To my knowledge, the resources attached to my response were never opened or reviewed by the administration.

Narrative #4 - "The Decision"

"They can't do that!"

I was simultaneously proud and heartbroken to see one of my student officers object so passionately to what I knew was both wrong and misguided.

"Well… they have made it very clear, that if we go out of town, all of the students in orchestra that are transgender will have to sleep in a separate cabin."

"How can they do this?"

"Why are they making this decision now?"

"What about all of the other times we traveled? We didn't have to do that before!"

I felt helpless as I was bombarded with questions and legitimate concerns.

"I know, I know… I do not have an explanation for it. I am just telling you what they told me. If we do not agree to abide by the sleeping arrangements… then we are not allowed to stay overnight."

"But we have been going to this camp for over 5 years!"

"Yes."

"Why wasn't it an issue before?!"

"I am not sure… like I said, I just wanted to make sure you all knew as officers before we went any further with the planning."

"But the trip is only two weeks away!"

"I know. This decision was made by the district over the summer. They had reached out to me before, but I did not understand why they were asking me so many questions."

I began to hesitate. I was not sure how much I could or should share with the students. I focused all of my energy into not reacting to their responses. I was just as outraged as they were… but I had to stay calm so we could figure out what we were going to do. The camp was only two weeks away. All of the students had already registered and paid. The buses were reserved and plans had already been solidified before we left school in May. I had received several phone calls over the summer asking me about the transgender students in my program… "How many are there? What are their names? Did they go with you to Corpus Christi? And who did they room with?" Any time I questioned the inquiry I was met with a cryptic "don't worry about it… we are just figuring some things out."

When I finally met with my principal to be given the ultimatum, I was told that "a parent complained" about the sleeping arrangements for one of our out-of-town trips. They had apparently expressed concerns that their cisgender student had been roomed with a transgender student. I was unfortunately not surprised that a parent may object to such an arrangement, but I was confused that I never heard of it. I prided myself on communication with my students and parents and worked hard to develop a relationship

of trust and transparency with everyone in my program. I had been a part of many conversations that stretched a growing spectrum of political, religious, personal, and professional topics. Of course I had opinions and beliefs of my own, but I would never challenge a parent or student for sharing their convictions or concerns.

Why had I not heard about this? Especially from the parent of the student my principal unknowingly identified. I had an extremely close relationship with them, having worked with both parents at the middle school and having taught their child since sixth grade. It just didn't make sense.

"Why wouldn't they have talked to me about their concerns?"

"That doesn't matter right now, Chris. Maybe they just didn't feel comfortable talking to you about it. I know that you are supportive of your transgender students… I think everyone knows that. Perhaps they didn't think they could express their concerns."

I looked down at the ground trying to process what was going on… I was confused and frustrated… and growing more and more concerned about what was coming.

"Look… we have been working with the district attorneys all summer to figure this out. We just can't have those kids sleeping in cabins with the rest of them."

"THOSE kids?!"

"You know what I mean… don't do that! I am the one that fought for the bathrooms in case you forgot."

"Yeah, and it is still a problem."

“Look Chris, it is not as simple as you want to make it. I have to consider both sides. Some people are just not comfortable with their kids sleeping in the same room as a transgender.”

“This is ridiculous. You know this is going to blow up.”

“That is why I am coming to you to figure it out before it does.”

“Separate but equal is against the law. This is not legal!”

“There are no laws in the state that tell us how to deal with this. That is why we have been talking to the attorneys.”

“I just can’t believe that this would be their recommendation.”

The principal and I had met multiple times over the previous two years to discuss LGBTQIA rights on campus. There was growing controversy about access to bathrooms and several of my students that were transgender were being punished for not using the “right restroom” for their gender assigned at birth. At first, our conversations were relatively casual. The principal knew that the students were in my program, and most of what we discussed seemed to be reconnaissance.

“What can you tell me about her?”

“Him.”

“Whatever… what can you tell me?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well… are they a decent kid?”

“Yes… I think so. I have known them for years. He started in middle school. This was before he started transitioning. I know it was really hard for him. His mother had been very supportive, but I know he has struggled with his father and some of his friends. He

got bullied a lot. Orchestra just ended up being a space that he felt most comfortable. I am grateful to have him in the program. He is currently serving as an officer."

"But… why are there so many of them in your program?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well… *they* just seem to all be in orchestra."

"What do you mean them?"

"Oh stop, you know what I am saying. Why are there so many transgender kids in orchestra?"

"I am not sure… I have guesses, but they are just assumptions based on random conversations and things I have heard."

"Like what?"

"Well… I know that some of the parents of my trans students have said that orchestra was the only place that their kids felt welcome and accepted. It is actually one of the few things I am genuinely proud of."

"No… that is great. I get it. I just don't know how to keep them out of trouble. Maybe you can talk to them."

"And say what?"

"I am not the bad guy here… I have given them access to the bathrooms in the front office. I just don't know what they expect me to do. I mean, I am really looking out for them! They do not need to be in the men's room. Could you imagine what could happen to them?"

"Well, they could pee."

"Don't be a smart ass… I am terrified that they are going to get attacked! Did she… I mean… he tell you that he was confronted in the bathroom the other day?"

"Yes… he did tell me."

"So… you see that it is a problem!"

"But isn't the problem the intolerance of the kid that was aggressive?"

"Chris, you know that this is a relatively conservative community. I can't just change what everyone believes so she can pee in the boy's bathroom."

"He… and I don't think you should be responsible for changing everyone's mind… but there are things we can do to educate the campus and support our LGBTQIA students… and faculty for that matter."

"Well… we are doing what we can."

"Maybe it is not enough…"

"I know… I hope you realize if I could change it all that I would."

I wanted to believe them… but I could not help but question their motivation. Would they change things to truly support our queer students, or would they change things so they simply wouldn't have to deal with it anymore? Either way, expressing the desire to change was a step in the right direction, regardless of how small a step it was.

One day, the principal called me down to their office… this was a frequent occurrence at this point in my tenure at the high school. I would get called out of class at least two to three times a month, in some cases multiple times in one day. The initial fear that I experienced from being summoned had developed into a constant state of mild anxiety any time I got to campus. At times, I didn't know if I was supposed to be grateful or exhausted. One of the assistant principals teased me at one point in a casual

conversation that I spent more time with the principal than they did. Again, I didn't know if that was an observation, a compliment, or an accusation.

As I entered the principal's office, I was confronted by one of my trans students, their mother, and one of our alumni from the high school who was also transgender. I had no idea why I was there.

"Oh good, thank you Mr. Hanson for coming down here."

"Hey Mr. Hanson."

"Hey everyone… what is going on?"

"Take a seat… we have just been discussing some of the issues we have been having with the bathrooms."

I realized I had walked into a heated debate about equity, access, and accommodations. I was so confused as to why I was being brought into the conversation.

"The student and parent spoke of you so often that I thought I might as well bring you down here."

"Oh…"

"Yes, thank you Mr. Hanson for coming down here. I am so grateful for everything you have done for my son."

"Of course! I am grateful to have him in my program."

After the introductions and compliments had been shared the conversation quickly returned to the topic of bathroom access. I sat there as a witness to an inevitable stalemate. I knew what my student and their parent wanted and needed, but I also knew that my principal had very little control in the situation… much of what they were able to communicate on the topic had been dictated to them from the central office. Many of the

responses were clearly scripted and sought neutrality and compromise above all else. I knew that my student and their parent would not be so easily pacified. I was frequently invited into the conversation to mediate and translate impassioned pleas for support and desperate attempts to mitigate the fallout for the district…

The dialog stretched well beyond the period I was called from. A hall monitor was assigned to my room. In all, I was in the office for almost 3 hours, fiercely arbitrating between both factions. We developed a plan that both parties could agree to…and it was arguably a success. Exhausted, I offered my student an emotional goodbye and lingered in the office to find an appropriate cadence with my principal before I left. At this point school had been released for over an hour.

"THANK YOU!"

"For what?"

"I think that went really well, and I know that they trust you… you should be proud of what we accomplished today…"

I knew how rare such a compliment was, and to be honest… I was proud. I was proud of my student, I was proud of the parent, I was proud of the alum that came back to advocate for change, and I was proud of my principal. They didn't have to call me into the conversation, and although I know there were other people that could have facilitated the conversation, I appreciated the opportunity to be the ally I wanted to be for my transgender students.

[…]

The officers voted unanimously to cancel the trip. If there were going to be separate sleeping quarters, then we were not going to go. We had two weeks to change

our plans and develop something comparable to our annual "orch-dorch boot camp." I spent the next two weeks bartering and begging to reallocate resources, cancel reservations, and make new plans to engage our students in their summer retreat before school started. This was a crucial event in preparing for the school year, welcoming our freshmen, and developing a sense of camaraderie and community that the program depended on. It was difficult to say the least. The principal objected to our decision and accused me of cancelling the trip to demonize the administration.

As much as I did not want to admit it… I knew this was the beginning of the end. I was beaten… in spite of my "public performances," acting as if everything was fine… I had almost nothing left. I didn't know who I could trust. Every compliment and praise was followed by another write-up or another verbal assault for making "yet another mistake." I honestly did not know what I was fighting for at this point… why was I trying so hard to keep a job that had proven to be so incredibly unhealthy for me. I had started seeking treatment from a psychiatrist again. I was diagnosed with an ulcer that the doctor said was related to stress. I couldn't help but to laugh when they asked me "is there anything in your life that is causing you stress?" as I clutched my stomach in pain. My IBS had returned as well, and I had lost an immense amount of weight, which I celebrated as the result of a diet… though I frequently skipped meals and worked through lunch "just to catch up." But I was never able to catch up. Every triumph simply turned into a mile marker as I limped on to a vanishing finish line. I knew my students were benefiting from the program, and I used them justify so many of my decisions to stay and put up with the mental, emotional, and psychological abuse. It was always for them. But the people closest to me knew… even before I did… I would not survive the year.

Artifact #16 - Resignation

February 20, 2019
[Address redacted]

Dear [High School Principal],

Please accept this letter as notice that I will be resigning from my job here at [the] High School at the end of my contract for the 2018-2019 school year with employment ending 6/3/19 and pay period ending 8/31/19.
I am grateful for the support and opportunities I have been afforded in [the school district] over the past 8 years. I am honored to have been a part of establishing the [school district] orchestra program and I will forever encourage and support the continued growth of art education within the school district and community.
If I can do anything to help with the transition in finding and/or training my replacement, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Christopher T. F. Hanson

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

> Without the ability to think about yourself, to reflect on your life, there's really no awareness, no consciousness. Consciousness doesn't come automatically; it comes through being alive, awake, curious, and often furious.
>
> —Maxine Greene

At this point in the study we have covered a remarkable amount of personal and intellectual territory which can be, and often is, considered independently and in isolation from one another within various disciplines. One aspect of the present study, however, is revealing the importance of bringing seemingly disparate scholars, perspectives, and experiences together to not only enhance, but truly substantiate the phenomenological nature of agency within education. Before presenting an analysis of the autoethnography provided in chapters four through six, let us first address the research questions of the study to solidify the epistemological foundation from which I promote teachers' professional agency through critical reflexivity.

Research Question 1

The first research question asks "what are the requisite components, variables, and mechanisms of agency?" Chapter two presents a select number of concepts related to agency within the fields of philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Specifically, both *self-efficacy* and *autonomy* are presented first and explored as related terms to the construct of human agency. These two terms, which are employed in a variety of disciplines, are often represented in contradistinction to one another. Similarly, *socio-cognitive theory* and *self-determination theory* were explored specifically within the field of social psychology. Significant parallels are drawn among these four concepts to

support an *analytical dualism* between structure and agency as posited by Margaret Archer (1995). All four terms are suggested to function as requisite components of agency.

I argue that *self-efficacy* and *socio-cognitive theory* focus on the consequence of socio-cultural environments on our sense of agency, that is, they describe our understanding and ability to author ourselves through mediated actions within and in response to given environments. Conversely, I suggest that *autonomy* and *self-determination theory* convey independence of the individual, which supports agency as a generative element of socio-cultural environments in which one acts. This, of course, does not resolve the omnipresent debate in agentic research on whether our understanding of *self* is realized through our sense of agency conditional to the environments in which we act, *or* are the *environments* in which we act constructed by our actions through the exercise of our perceived agency?

Margaret Archer's (2012) *morphogenetic cycle* offers one resolution to this question by appreciating the dialectical relationship of agency and structure within a temporal framework (as seen in Figure 1). Propora explains that the morphogenetic cycle "identifies the ingredients of any explanation of social change, namely structure, culture, and agency, and the generic form of their interrelation. Any particular social change will need to be explained by the particular structures, by the particular cultures, and by the particular agents involved" (2013, p.26). That is, in order to appreciate the change that is generated by the dialectical interactions of structure and agency over time, one must explore it at the micro-level, where agents are engaged with social and cultural structures within the morphogenetic cycle. This has been accomplished in the present study with

autoethnographic inquiry constructed from the artifacts and narratives of chapters four through six.

Similar to the morphogenetic cycle, Priestley et al. (2015a) suggest an *ecological approach* (seen in Figure 2) based on the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1996) which promotes a *centrist view of agency* that recognizes the *autonomous* aspects of actors to act independent of structural influence without completely neglecting the effects of environmental circumstance, while balancing *determinism* which supports the dominance of structural factors in actors' abilities to act without neglecting the significance of agents to construct the environments in which they operate (Archer 2010, Biesta & Tedder, 2012, Parker 2016).

Despite the significance of temporality in the conceptualization of agency, both the morphogenetic cycle and the ecological approach place us back in the argument of which agentic elements, concepts, and/or theories come first in generating agency: those focused on one's *sense of agency* or those concerned with socio-cultural *structures* in which one acts. The goal of the present study, however, is to appreciate the importance of the ecological approach *with* the morphogenetic cycle, self-efficacy *with* autonomy, SCT *with* SDT, and structure *with* agency. I move beyond the centrist view and amplify the importance of analytical dualism to *all* related agentic concepts that pose a potential contradiction. In doing so, the subsequent *dialectics* promote the need for reflexivity and intrapersonal inquiry to generate *agency* as an emergent phenomenological construct.

In short, your actions may be *influenced* by your past habits, present judgment, imagined future, or socio-political cultural environments and structures, but your agency, through reflexive practice, still exists because of the dialectically generated agentic

beliefs. As articulated by Emirbayer and Mische (1996) "the ways in which people *understand* their own relationship to past, future, and present make a difference to their actions; changing conceptions of agentic possibility in relation to the structural contexts profoundly influence how actors in different periods and places see their worlds as more or less responsive to human imagination, purpose, and effort" (p.973).

Research Question 1a

This addresses research question 1a directly which asks "how are [agentic elements] affected by agentic beliefs?" The construction of beliefs from the evaluation of lived experience reflects the intrapersonal nature of human agency realized, for example, in the mechanism of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) though this can and should be projected to related terms and concepts. That is, what one *believes* of their capabilities, regardless of the actual ability of achievement, has a direct impact on their actions and ultimately the environment within which they are acting. Although this may seem contradictory at first, particularly with cited definitions of agency that use autonomy to support notions of "independence" from external social forces, such definitions simultaneously recognize the presence of social structures and their influence on action. Furthermore, it positions autonomy as a *perceived* independence of those social structures, harkening back to the power and significance of intrapersonal *beliefs* referenced previously. Therefore, by claiming that autonomy is the capacity to be one's own person by taking ownership over one's actions rather than claiming the effect of external forces, we are actually conceding the existence of external forces, but promoting an intrapersonal understanding of one's actions over environmental influences. Believing that you are autonomous, does not mean that you will act autonomously. Autonomy, as a component of agency, loses its effects if

the agent does not believe they exist. Similar parallels are drawn to SCT and SDT as well as the morphogenetic cycle and the ecological approach.

What is paramount in this dialog is the necessity of agentic *beliefs*, or a *sense of agency*, to validate the effects of agentic variables and their requisite components. It is this point that I argue is not developed enough in the current research on agency, particularly in the ethnographic research of Priestley et al. (2015a) who employed the ecological approach to understand teacher agency.

Research Questions 1b & 1c

This leads us to question 1b which asks "how do agentic beliefs affect professional teacher agency?" and question 1c which asks "what is the relationship between agency and structure within the paradigms of education and teaching?"

As previously discussed, applying the concept of agency within the fields of teaching and education has just recently gained attention in contemporary scholarship (Lasky 2005; Meyer 2011; Robinson 2012; Priestley, M., Edwards, Priestley, A., and Miller, 2012; Vaughn 2013; Jaworski, 2015; Yang, 2015; Priestley, Biesta, Philippou, and Robinson, 2015b; Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson, 2015a). Broadly speaking, it has generated valuable insight into the actions, training, retention, and subsequent power of teachers in both personal and professional contexts. Additionally, amongst the scholarly works published on teacher agency there is a persistent challenge to honor the interdisciplinary, phenomenological, emergent complexity of agency within frameworks of empirical inquiry (Priestley et al., 2011, Parker, 2016). Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2015a) offer one of the most robust explorations of the concept and its potential for empirical inquiry in their book entitled *Teacher Agency: An Ecological Approach*. Although this book has been a fundamental source for my own research, again, as previously stated, I do

not believe that the authors go far enough to concretize the significance of teacher beliefs in authoring one's sense of agency.

Priestley et al. (2015a) offer an extensive discussion of teacher beliefs, but ultimately, relegate them to serve as one aspect of teacher agency which works in coalition with several other temporal and structural elements to generate agency (as seen in Figure 1). I argue, in the broader context of agentic research, that the beliefs one holds about agency and structure will not only directly affect one's actions within different environments, but ultimately constitute one's agency as realized by the actions one takes. In other words, the codification of agentic variables, particularly those related to socio-political, cultural, and structural factors are completely bound by the beliefs of the actor. Put simply, one acts based on their perceived beliefs. Although an actor will be affected by an endless number of agentic variables, if they are not conscious of their effects, they essentially do not exist and do not affect one's sense of agency.

Agency is defined by one's agentic beliefs. This is extremely important to the concept of school reform and the recognition of teachers as agents of change (Priestley et al. 2012). Additionally, this is something that I experienced first-hand as a public school teacher, especially while discovering and developing my beliefs about teaching and learning during my time in graduate school at Texas State. This is the reason I have included artifacts which elucidate my thoughts on teaching and learning throughout the study, particularly those shared in chapter five. The beliefs I developed about education became structural elements for the environment in which I exercised my agency as a teacher. Specific examples of this which are evidenced in the autoethnography will be explored in the analysis that follows. I want to reiterate, however, the importance of this realization in response to research questions 1b and 1c. Our beliefs constitute our sense of agency and dramatically shape and affect the perceived social, political, and cultural

structures in which we act. Recognizing this in the field of education is truly liberating to both students and teachers and arguably a necessity to ensure learning can occur (Freire, 1998, Greene 1977, 1988, Horton, 2003, Rancière, 1991).

Research Question 2 & 2a

Through the authoring of the autoethnography in the present study, I discovered a paradox that exists for teachers (and other actors within education) who practice agency within systems and structures of accountability. This addresses the second research question which asks "how is accountability understood as a structural element in education?" and question 2a which asks "how does accountability as structure affect teacher professional agency?"

The study *troubles* accountability as an agential structure of education with a *double(d)* lens, a methodology postulated in the seminal works of Patti Lather (1997, 2012). Furthermore, the study utilizes the *Four Organizational Frames* of Bolman & Deal (2017) to investigate accountability as a structure in education constituted by political, structural, symbolic, and human resource-oriented experiences. The frames offer a valuable tool to better understand the structural nature of accountability within the larger conversation of conceptualizing teacher agency. In order to fully address these questions, an analysis of the autoethnography which details my understanding of accountability as structure (provided in chapter four) is needed. Additionally, the analysis provides an answer to the last research question which asks "what are the benefits of employing critically reflexive practices in teaching to promote agentic beliefs?"

Analysis

Utilizing Chang's (2008) strategies for analysis and interpretation (as articulated in chapter 3) I engage the data presented in the autoethnography without artificially

separating or superficially organizing it to be easier for either analysis or interpretation. Rather, I will strive for what Chang (2008) describes as *balance.* "Data analysis and interpretation are often conducted concurrently and their activities are intertwined… analysis and interpretation should be seen not in conflict with each other, but as a balancing act between fracturing and connecting, between zooming in and zooming out, between science and art" (Chang, 2008, p.128).

In appreciation of this perspective, an organic and artistic presentation of my findings is used to represent the fluidity and interconnectedness of topics and seven themes in what appropriately reflects the dialectic exchange of structure and agency within the ecological and morphogenetic approaches (Archer, 1995; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). I position myself, through reflexivity, in the iterational (past), practical-evaluative (present), and projective (future) dimensions of my agential experiences within the structures of accountability outlined in chapter four using Bolman and Deals *Four Frames*. Within each of these temporal dimensions as originally posited by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and applied to ethnographic research on teacher agency by Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson (2015a), I explore my own sense of agency and how it is paradoxically affected by systems of accountability in identified themes.

Theme 1: Lack of Structure

One aspect of the autoethnography that I found to be most prevalent, and arguably most damning to my sense of agency, was the lack of accountability structures in which I could and did operate as a fine arts teacher. This is evidenced in chapter four in both the interview conducted with Tom Waggoner as well as the survey completed by my colleagues across the state of Texas. The absence of a viable structure of accountability

perpetuated many of the agentic problems I was facing. Particularly when I and my colleagues would have to make assumptions about what and to whom we were accountable. This directly impacted our actions and, in most cases, conflated inappropriate systems, structures, and individuals as accountability.

For example, in response to the survey on accountability in fine arts for the state of Texas referenced in chapter four, teachers identified "performances/products" and "competition/UIL" as the "best assessment of effectiveness" for their teaching (see Appendix C for a matrix of the responses). This is counterintuitive to the National Core Arts Standards which include performance as one of four strands of content-based standards in the arts classroom. In other words, teachers acting on the perception that products and competition are the best assessment of their teaching are subsequently supporting a system of accountability for fine arts teachers that depends on products and competition to define success. This is referenced in chapter six within narrative #3 during my dialog with my high school principal about being disqualified in two events at our annual UIL events:

… I just need you to answer these questions: Did you or did you not tell your students that getting disqualified was not a big deal?"

"Well…"

"Yes or no! Did you tell them it wasn't a big deal? Because it is!"

"We talked about what happened and I always tell them that whatever happens on the stage I expect them to do their best and share what they have worked on…"

"NO! That is not what I am talking about. You are undermining this whole thing in front of your students and it's not okay. Tell me… and I want an honest answer… did you intentionally disqualify your students to prove some kind of point?"

"WHAT?! NO! How could you think I would do that?!"

"I don't know any more Chris. I really don't… I have never dealt with something like this. I know how you feel about UIL…"

"But I would NEVER sacrifice my students' welfare to prove a point! How could you think that of me? UIL isn't what defines the success of our program…"

"Well it is at this high school, and I know I have made that point very clear."

"UIL is a snapshot, it is no better than a standardized test…"

"You're right, but just like the standardized tests, whether we like it or not, we are judged by the results."

"And you're okay with that?"

"That's not the point Chris! You either do your job or you don't, and right now… I don't see you doing your job."

"Clearly we have very different definitions of what my job is then."

"Ya think!?"

This exchange was one of many examples of corrupt and spurious systems of accountability I was expected to operate within as a public school fine arts teacher in Texas. To clarify, I am not insinuating that competition cannot be used in education, but I do not believe it should be used as the only assessment tool nor elevated to *the* system of accountability for fine arts teachers, students, and programs (as discussed in the interview with Tom Waggoner).

Within such a system, in which competition drives assessment and accountability, one should simply question the effects on those who do not "win" to understand its inherent danger. Education is not and should not be facilitated as a "winner take all" game, in which only the best teachers and students experience success. As stated in chapter four in reference to the *symbolic* nature of competition as accountability in the arts: "There are strong, perceivably unchangeable traditions that have been bred into our public-school music programs to not only *promote* but *require* competition to evaluate our student's success. It would seem as though the arts are suffering Goodhart's law, for when the measure becomes the target, it ceases to be a good measure."

Again, beyond the inherent problems of misusing competition in the arts, the greater issue is the lack of structure for accountability. Without a clear understanding of what accountability is for fine arts teachers, teachers (and administrators for that matter) are forced to project and construct systems of accountability in the desperate attempt to substantiate their actions. In viewing accountability through the human resource frame in chapter four I argue "without the knowledge of one's impact on the environment [we] are acting in, the environment ceases to exist and the motivation to act is reduced to *habitus*" (Archer, 1995). The call for an "awakening" to the lack of accountability in the fine arts is the first, and arguably most important step to promote agency of fine arts teachers in public-schools. Without a consciousness of how, why, and what we are teaching, our ability to affect our environment, and subsequently our students, is lost (Freire, 1998). This important move in the larger agentic dialog for teachers leads to the second theme I found within the autoethnography, the oppressiveness of our own ignorance.

Theme 2: Oppression of Ignorance

Throughout the autoethnography I recognized recurring examples of ignorance related to both structures of accountability and their effects on teacher agency. Although the term ignorance may seem severe, I use it intentionally to reference a state I believe most fine arts teachers find themselves in: having no knowledge of particular structures and lacking the agency to seek the knowledge necessary to affect the structures they act within. As Johnathon Raymond is quoted "you can't know what you don't know." This should not be conflated with stupidity: the lack of knowledge and the lack of desire to attain that knowledge. I believe, as evidenced by the frequent dialog referenced with my colleagues at competitive events in chapter four, we know that we are not satisfied with the structures we are acting within, yet we lack sufficient knowledge of our own power and agency to enact the change we desire. This is why I reference the ignorance I and other fine arts teachers experience around structure of accountability as *oppressive*. Not knowing stultifies our actions and perpetuates the structures we act within. I see this in the work of both Rancière (1991) and Freire (1998). Consequently, it has become a significant part of my own philosophies on teaching and learning, as detailed in chapter five, and profoundly affect my sense of agency as a teacher.

I believe, as stated in chapter four, "the structures that are in place are operating under assumed precedence perpetuated by inherited traditions rather than coherent responsive policy." That is, the ignorance we experience within the systems we are acting in are being passed on to future generations within educational systems and ultimately reinforce unjust structures of accountability. Educators, therefore, are relegated to serve

as cogs in an unwieldy machine as opposed to dynamic and autonomous actors in evolving structures of education. In chapter five I quote Biesta (2010) who argues that "any education worthy of its name should always contribute to the processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting" (p. 21). This, in short, is my argument for the necessity for agentic dialog amongst educators.

It is, as Rancière (1991) would call it, our moment of emancipation from the ignorance I believe we are suppressed by. Of course, in order to ensure such intellectual freedom, one must secure both a sense of agency that compels one to act within a given structure, and a structure that will respond to that action in support of the beliefs acted upon. This folds back into the importance of the dialectic nature of agency and structure. It is not meant to complicate the concept of *change* but rather affirm the interdependence of our actions on the structures we act within (Archer, 1995). Furthermore, it promotes the significance of agentic dialog in restructuring educational environments. As stated by Rancière (1991) "[we] develop the intelligence that the needs and circumstances of [our] existence demand of [us]…where need ceases, intelligence slumbers, unless some stronger will makes itself understood and says: continue; look at what you are doing and what you *can* do if you apply the same intelligence, you have already made use of, by brining to each thing the same attention, by not letting yourself stray from your path" (p.51).

As seen in the exchange of narrative #1 both I and my principal were ignorant of the process for non-renewal. Such ignorance dramatically affected my sense of agency. I clamored to gain control over the situation by seeking resources from colleagues, friends,

and teachers' unions. As condemning and harmful as the experience was, in reflecting upon it now, I can appreciate the incredible amount of agency I exercised in not accepting "the threat" from my principal. I was able to use the lack of structure in that situation to advocate for myself, and ultimately for reform to financial accountability in my district. This is not to suggest that my actions and reactions to the events detailed in artifacts #1 and #2 and narrative #1 were without fault. It does, however, reinforce the opportunity for change in awakening to a lack of structure. I had, for years at that point, operated with my colleagues and administrators in ignorance to the lack of financial accountability that existed. Of course, there was no reason to challenge the structures of financial accountability we were operating within, as our actions reinforced a *perceived* structure until, as Rancière would have it, our needs and circumstances changed. This time of *habitus* (as theorized by Margaret Archer, 1995) represents a third theme in the autoethnography that I believe affects agency, which I refer to as the "status quo."

Theme 3: The Status Quo

Throughout the autoethnography I recognize multiple periods of time leading up to a moment of change in which I (and others) where operating within, what can be termed, the "status quo." To be clear, my goal is not to demonize the status quo, but to elevate our consciousness of the structures we operate within through the critique of the mechanisms that support such structures through our actions. This critical inquiry into educational structures is what I consider the foundation of teaching and learning, as articulated in chapter five. Greene states in her argument for the arts in education

> I do not see how we can educate young persons if we do not enable them on some level to open spaces for themselves - spaces for communicating across the boundaries, for choosing, for becoming different in the midst of intersubjective relationships. That is one of the reasons I would argue for

> aware engagements with the arts for everyone, so that - in this democracy - human beings will be less likely to confine themselves to the main text, to coincide forever with what they are (p. 28).

I would argue that "aware engagements" are not just for young persons, but equally important for those educating young persons. As I continue to find myself inspired by Greene's words to move beyond "the main text" and to push against the way things are in my role as an educator, I recognize so many systems and structures that fail to respond to my unique needs as a fine arts teacher and the needs of my students as learners. As I reflect on my experiences with UIL, particularly those in narrative #3, I appreciate Biesta's assertion that "it is… first of all in the interest of those who benefit from the status quo to keep things the way they are rather than to open up discussion about what education might be or become" (2010, p.16).

Although I am operating on an assumption, I cannot help but recognize that my colleague, who avoided eye contact with me when leaving the contest office, runs an extremely competitive and arguably "successful" orchestra program within the UIL region. In spite of the support and/or indifference I received from others in the UIL process that year, I question what the rule I was accused of violating was designed to protect. How, after being assessed formally and informally, did my program for the UIL event not meet scrutiny until performed in front of my peers? Did my unconscious challenge of the rules, by performing the music that was in violation of those rules, undermine the success of my colleagues, who may also disagree with the rule, but uphold it through their compliance? As stated in chapter six "to [ask these questions] would simply bring the entire system under scrutiny, and there were too many people who were

successful within the system and that would not know what success could look like without it, to justify questioning it."

As I continually came to realize, any sense of agency that I believed I had in my classroom was quickly and easily challenged by hegemonic structures of assessment and accountability. I recognized how shallow others' understandings were of the performing arts. How could someone view us as successful without trophies? I saw it as a kind of *academic apathy*. It was easy to look at the trophy case to evaluate a program's effectiveness. It was much harder to invest in the teacher, the students, and the classroom to understand *what* they were doing as opposed to *how well* they did it. As articulated in narrative #2, as long as no one was complaining, there was not a problem.

Running the risk of sounding simply insubordinate (which I have been accused of multiple times in my career as an educator) I am inspired by Greene's retelling of Kierkegaard's awakening to complicate existence as shared in chapter five:

> Kierkegaard recognized, while seated in a park on a Sunday afternoon, the preoccupation of his peers in their goal to improve their quality of life and in turn make things easier for their fellow man. He chastised the "benefactors of the age" who worked so tirelessly to ease the lives of others, but ultimately condemned their future to a systematized existence which he called the "civilizational malaise." From his observations, Kierkegaard resolved to dedicate himself to complicating life for others by challenging what we know and accept as reality. He sought to create difficulty in everything as to incite beauty in the complexity of our lives, as opposed to ignoring such intricacies in a hopeless attempt to simplify life (Greene, 1977, p.291).

Again, I do not make this reference to promote some sense of anarchy amongst educators, but more importantly, to establish and encourage spaces in which we actively complicate teaching and learning to fully appreciate its complexity. In doing so we build our sense of agency as teachers and ensure the plasticity of the structures we

operate within. This is not limited to accountability and/or curriculum in the arts. As stated in chapter five, I believe the "stultification of modern education and systematization of learning are perpetuated by teachers who practice *bad faith* and do not take the crucial leap required to achieve authentic learning, the learning of oneself." In challenging the status quo, we are not just interrogating the stasis we live in, but igniting our sense of agency. Regardless of the outcomes (as referenced in my argument for a *correlated* system of learning in chapter 1) the ultimate goal is not necessarily change, but the exercise and affirmation of agentic beliefs (Freire, 1970).

Promoting agency in this way has become much more complicated than I initially theorized, and brings me to the fourth theme of my analysis, which I refer to as the *double(d)* nature of accountability.

Theme 4: Double(d) Accountability

As articulated in artifact #2, I borrow from the work of Patti Lather (1997, 2012) to postulate a *double(d)* accountability of educators that *troubles* the exercise of teacher agency. Lather (2012) describes the key to double(d) logic as "the double necessity of working from *within* the institutional constraints of a tradition, even while trying to expose what that tradition has exposed or forgotten" (p. 14). I believe this is evidenced in all four narratives provided in chapter six. More specifically, within narratives #2 and #4, I found myself challenging established structures of academic and professional accountability while simultaneously being held accountable to the very structures I was challenging. Although my response was relatively different in each narrative, my sense of agency was complicated in both, by the structures of accountability I was acting within i.e. deadlines for grades and housing for trans students on school trips.

The *framing* of accountability, practiced in artifact #3, provides a valuable and necessary opportunity to further appreciate the double(d) logic in systems of accountability within education. Bolman and Deal (2017) define *framing* as the construction of mental models to help one understand and negotiate particular territories. As stated in chapter five, "using the frames, accountability can be better understood as a socially constructed, complex organizational system (being made up of persons who operate within that system to support its structure)." As I call for the critical inquiry of the structures we operate within, the four organizational frames of Bolman and Deal (2017) provide an excellent system for analysis and critique. Admittedly, there are multiple ways in which one may examine the social, political, and cultural structures they inhabit. But given the characteristic complexity of educational organizations and institutions, I believe Bolman and Deal's (2017) model is both accessible and extremely affective.

The purpose of recognizing the notion of double(d) accountability is not to discourage teachers from examining the structures they work within. Rather, I see this theme as an opportunity for professional development, in which spaces can be created that allow teachers to engage in agentic dialog and expose the challenges they are facing within particular structures, without suffering from the prohibitive expectations to uphold such structures. The importance of dialog in promoting teacher agency cannot be overstated. Therefore, the fifth theme identified from the autoethnography is the significance of dialectics in attaining agentic beliefs.

Theme 5: The Significance of Dialectics

The concept of dialectics in the research of structure and agency is both profound and robust (Scott, 2013), particularly in the work of critical realist philosophers such as Margaret Archer (1982, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2012). In short, dialectics "is a term used to describe a method of philosophical argument that involves some sort of contradictory process between opposing sides" (Maybee, 2020, para.1).

Throughout the autoethnography and many other lived experiences, I have frequently found myself navigating "between opposing sides" of various personal and professional issues. To both pursue and arrive at a place where my thoughts and opinions are not only heard, but have the power to incite change, is *not* an easy task. As discussed in the previous themes, there are multiple challenges to opening spaces in which one can critique their actions in context to the structures and environments in which they live and act.

At this point, it would be irresponsible of me to not recognize my own privilege as a cisgender, white, male, born and raised in the United States of America. So much of my sense of agency is tied to my position and privilege in society and the cultures of the spaces I live and work. As humbly stated by Maxine Greene (1995) "I must recognize… how hard it has been to confront the controls, the principles of exclusion and denial that have allowed me a certain range of utterances and prevented others. I have not easily come to terms with the ways in which education, too often, following the lines of class, gender, and race, permits and forbids the expression of different people's experiences" (p.110). This is one of the many reasons I decided to research agency in education. In promoting agentic dialog, I believe the opportunity

exists to break down social, cultural, and political barriers that prevent certain actors from exercising their agency within given structures. The fact that so many related topics, such as emancipation, liberation, freedom, and opportunity, arise when discussing education and human agency is *not* coincidental. I believe the work of Maxine Greene, Paolo Freire, Jacques Rancière, Myles Horton, and Gert Biesta, among many others, is vital to understanding and appreciating the significance of education and agency in our lives.

In her remarkable work *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988), Maxine Greene articulates her desire to celebrate "persons who could never take freedom for granted in [the United States of America]: women, members of minority groups, immigrants, [and] newcomers…" She explores how "…some of them, naming what stood in the way of their becoming, were able to posit openings in what appeared to most observers to be closed situations, openings through which they could move…" she encourages others to "…engage with them, not from the vantage point of society or the system or the cosmos, but (wherever possible) from *their* vantage points as actors, agents in an unpredictable world" (p.55).

As teachers confront the structures of education they work within and expose conflicting ideas, practices, expectations, assessments, and more, the importance of dialectics becomes paramount. It is not just our individualistic perspectives and experiences that incite change. It is in the active *dialog between* individual perspectives and experiences with those structures that conflict, restrict, and prohibit our actions that the possibility for change is born. In every narrative from chapter six a dialog exists between me (as teacher) and others, who represent conflict exposed from my actions. It is

in these actions that silence is breached and agency is realized. Without these actions, as stated in chapter two, we are reduced to habitus. I recognize silence as the sixth theme from the autoethnography, in order to highlight its effects on the establishment of agency.

Theme 6: Silence

Agency is realized in the both the actions that we take as well as those that we choose not to take. In chapter six I included a section entitled "silence" after artifact #15 to communicate the lack of response of the administration from the invitations made in Artifact #14 to address the challenges of the LGBTQIA community on campus. The silence was a choice, and an exercise of agency on the part of the administration. To my knowledge, none of the administration that I was working with at the time were members of the LGBTQIA community. Their silence represented a point of privilege, as the invitation to challenge discriminatory policies and practices at our campus aimed at the LGBTQIA community did not necessarily affect them. It also represented accountability, which I view through the political and symbolical frames.

I knew, through previous interactions, that my principal was often following directives from the district office pertaining to LGBTQIA students on campus. They had admitted to me that there were many things they would do different, but the district office had instructed them to do otherwise. Whether or not this was true, it represented a political aspect of accountability in education which frequently limits the voice of its agents (students, parents, teachers, staff, administration, etc.). Again, one may perceive my dialog with the principal in the narrative #4 as performative, but I choose to believe that there were political elements that ultimately affected and dictated the outcomes of the situation. Additionally, there were symbolic elements of both the artifacts and the

narrative pertaining to trans students in the orchestra program that revealed obvious conflict in both policies and practices related to LGBTQIA students.

What is significant is the necessity of action to realize one's agency. As mentioned previously in theme 5, this is not easily done. So much of who we are and how we act is affected by our environments. Where I experience an elevated sense of agency and choose to raise my voice to communicate my perspectives and experience, others retreat, and assume the lack agency in the same situation due to socio-cultural and/or political factors. This was made apparent to me in multiple professional settings, my sense of agency was radically different than my colleagues. Understanding our sense of agency was different is one of the many reasons I choose to pursue this study.

As stated in artifact #6, I believe Myles Horton (1972) articulates the importance of action quite passionately,

> The danger is not too much, but too little participation. People will only learn to make decisions by making them. In addition to providing a means by which people can make education serve their self-determined needs, an updated decision-making process is educational in its own right. It is a means of accelerating the kind of learning people need if they are to take control of their own lives and govern themselves (pg. 229).

My own fear in doing this research is not the invitation of critique, or an increase of agency that yields intense critical dialog and change in education, but rather the fear of silence amongst educators who do not believe they have agency to speak. Maxine Greene (1993), in quoting Michael Foucault, states "the point of a system of constraints is whether it leaves individuals the liberty to transform the system. The restrictions that exist… have to be within the reach of those affected by them so they at least have the possibility of altering them" (p.220). By promoting agency amongst teachers I believe a space is opened in which educators can celebrate their perspectives and needs to better

serve their students. This statement of belief is one of many that I have written in my analysis and leads to the seventh and final theme I recognized in the autoethnography.

Theme 7: Beliefs

In chapter one I quote the Greek philosopher Epictetus who said "when something happens, the only thing in your power is your attitude toward it; you can either accept it or resent it. It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters" (from the *Enchiridion* A. D. c. 125). This quote profoundly affected my understanding of agency as something that was *perceived* as opposed to *achieved*. Although Priestley et al. (2015a) offer an important and detailed perspective of teacher beliefs and their effect on teacher agency, I argue that they do not go far enough. I believe that agency is a collection of beliefs about one's capacity to act based on past experiences, future goals, and present desires. This definition is very similar to others, in that it is temporally bound and recognizes the emergent phenomenological nature of agency through reflexivity. The difference is the promotion of beliefs *as* agency, opposed to beliefs serving as a generative mechanism of agency.

I first recognized this in my engagement with colleagues who frequently reacted and responded to professional conflict differently than myself. This is not to insinuate that our reactions and responses were diametrically opposed. More often than not, we agreed on particular issues, but we chose to act on our beliefs in very different ways. At first, I understood this to be a difference of personality, which it very well may be. But beyond social perception, I saw a fundamental difference in our sense of agency. That is what we *believed* about our roles and responsibilities as fine arts educators. These beliefs directly affected our actions. Artifact #1 details the responses of my colleagues from

across the state in a survey pertaining to accountability. The survey results make it quite clear that there are very different beliefs about accountability in the fine arts. Additionally, in artifact #1, my interview with Tom Waggoner revealed serious discrepancies with how accountability was defined, understood, and practiced for fine arts educators across the state. I believe these differences of beliefs result in a wide range of actions by fine arts educators and administrators across the state to establish and practice accountability. These actions, based on beliefs, are what I argue represent the agency of teachers within the structural context of accountably.

To be clear, my goal in articulating the agency as a system of beliefs is not to promote homogeneity. In fact, based on the dialectic nature of structure and agency discussed in theme five, if all beliefs were found to be the same, there would be no need for agency, and we would find ourselves in a form of habitus. My goal in promoting beliefs in the authoring of agency is to focus agentic conversations which I believe are too often consumed by ancillary components and mechanisms of both structure and agency. As suggested by Rancière (1991) I think the most important question we can ask teachers and students alike is "what do you think about it?" (p.36).

This question emancipates the individual to the imagined possibilities of what could be, as opposed to what is. It is a radical and daring ontological move that empowers the individual to appreciate the significance of their own perspective and thoughts. Perceived conflict, therefore, is either enriched or silenced by the opportunity to ask of oneself and others "what do you think?" As stated previously, I recognize the immense amount of privilege I exercised throughout the autoethnography, and how such privilege

reflects my enhanced sense of agency. When presented with conflict, I choose to speak, because I believe someone is listening and that I will be heard.

What fascinates me about agentic beliefs (although I think an argument can be made that all beliefs are agentic, as they affect our actions), is that they do not have to be "true" in the perception of others to affect our sense of agency. This can be seen in the hypochondriac, who believes they have no sense of agency in spite of structures that promote their ability to act, and in someone with immense confidence or hope for change, who acts in spite of structures that diminish or prohibit their actions. All of this provides a necessary orientation to agentic work. That is, in facilitating agentic dialog, are we securing a space in which someone is listening to actors who are given room to answer the question "what do you think?" Such a space provides the needed engagement to promote agentic beliefs, and subsequently, support agentic change through dialog.

Implications for Future Research

There are many related topics and aspects of teacher agency in the present study that I hope to continue in future scholarship. Among them, I recognize the need to support agentic research that utilizes reflexive methodologies, such as autoethnography. I believe this is the best tool for exploring intrapersonal beliefs that directly affect one's sense of agency. Additionally, due to the interdisciplinary nature of agency, there are a growing number of authors in related fields that I hope to explore to both expand and enrich my understanding of agency in related fields of study.

Among the interdisciplinary connections, I would like to explore and expand the use of critical realism in agentic research, as well as educational and religious philosophy. I am curious how our beliefs, which affect our sense of agency, are nurtured

through our social, cultural, religious, informal, and formal educations. In expanding my knowledge of Rancière's work in education, I would like to better understand the role of agency in *universal teaching*. I am aware that Gert Biesta, who has studied teacher agency extensively, has similar interests in Rancière, and I am intrigued to read more from Biesta's cannon of works to potentially discover other parallels in our thinking about emancipatory education and human agency.

I limited my exploration of teacher agency in the present study to secondary school music programs, specifically orchestra. I hope there will be a desire and opportunity to do similar studies that explore teacher agency through intrapersonal dialog in other subjects that are taught in public and private schools at multiple grade levels. With such scholarship, the opportunity would exist for comparative analysis which could potentially enhance professional standards for educators and teacher preparation programs.

Lastly, the study focuses on teacher agency in dialog with accountability as a structure conceptualized with Bolman and Deal's (2017) *four organizational frames*. I hope that future research will utilize additional methods for analyzing and understanding accountability and its effects on teacher agency. Additionally, there should be opportunities to explore other structures within educational environments that affect the agency of various agents (parents, students, teachers, staff, administration, etcetera) at different levels (K-16), which would yield a wealth of research for continued comparative analysis.

Implications for Practice

Having transitioned from teaching in public schools to teaching in higher education in a teacher preparation program, there are a number of applications from the present study that I am currently working on and hope to see standardized in the near future.

First, I hope to synthesize my research from the present study and publish a concise document (a handbook or manual) that would highlight the importance of teacher agency in realizing school improvement and the significance of intrapersonal dialog to promote agentic beliefs amongst educators and students. The document would be utilized by school administrators to evaluate aspects of teacher agency on their campus, as well as by teachers to evaluate aspects of student agency in their classroom. Practical guides would be offered to evaluate one's own sense of agency and to engage others in agentic dialog to identify agentic barriers and challenges for students, teachers, staff, and administrators. The goal would target the concept of *correlated learning* described in chapter one, which promotes the interdependence of all agents within an educational system through critical reflexivity.

Second, I plan to pilot a series of workshops for future educators that would introduce them to concepts of teacher and student agency and provide opportunities to develop agentic beliefs before entering the classroom. I am extremely fortunate to be working with the School of Education at Seattle Pacific University this spring (2021) to facilitate a "teacher agency workshop" with the 2021-2022 cohort of undergraduate teacher candidates. After completing the workshop I will track the teacher candidates' experiences during their student-teacher internship and assess the usefulness and

effectiveness of the agentic strategies and exercises they were introduced to. The goal is to promote agentic conversations as a professional standard for all pre-service educators.

Lastly, and most ambitiously, I hope to develop a survey instrument that can be used by campuses and administrations to assess teacher and student agency and provide valuable feedback on agentic variables that can be addressed through campus improvement plans and professional development. There is enough published research to support the correlation of school improvement to teachers' positive sense of agency, but very little research that provides instruments to assess agency and strategies for responding to agentic needs.

Conclusions

As I write the final pages of this dissertation, I am reminded of the timeless words of Maxine Greene who says "I am forever on the way" (1995, p.1). I know that so much of my journey has just begun with this study, which evolved from an impassioned desire to substantiate my perceptions of inequity in the accountability of fine arts educators in the state of Texas, to an autoethnography of my life as a public school teacher in central Texas. The work presented in this study represents a radical personal and professional transformation which spans the past seven years of my life. From my first assignments in the doctoral program at Texas State exploring the work of Patti Lather, to the pinnacle of my career as a public school performing arts teacher, the birth of both of my children, my resignation from San Marcos High School, and my transition to higher education as the director of music education and orchestral activities at Seattle Pacific University. Through everything that I have experienced and learned, I am grateful that I have been

able to share it here, with the ambitious goal of inspiring others to think reflexively about their own sense of agency in the world.

I have discovered and developed my own philosophy of teaching and learning, which I detail in chapters one and five, and which I practiced as a middle school and high school music teacher and continue to explore as a college professor. In all of it, I humbly recognize the significance of agency in how I think, act, and respond to the world. In chapter two, I presented a review of literature that illustrates my unique understanding of agency as an emergent phenomenological set of beliefs. I celebrate the momentous task of trying to incapsulate such an interdisciplinary topic, and gracefully accept the challenge of seeking new and evolving perspectives of agency across multiple fields.

In chapter three I outlined my methodological design to realize agency through autoethnography within a critical realist framework, both challenging and pacifying intense ontological and epistemological debates. My research design included an excavation of personal and professional artifacts and experiences, many of which I am sharing for the first time. I organized my autoethnography into three chapters that revealed my research and conceptualization of accountability as an agentic structure (chapter four), the development and establishment of my philosophical understanding of teaching, learning, and myself (chapter five), and a deeply personal foray into the last two years of my career as a public school teacher, in which, I address my personal challenges with systems of accountability and their effect on my sense of agency (chapter six).

Authoring the autoethnography allowed me to practice reflexivity and develop a complex and sagacious understanding of who I was, who I am, and who I aspire to be as an educator. In this final chapter, I answer the research questions and provide an analysis

of the autoethnography. The analysis identifies seven themes that I believe incapsulate the benefits of critical reflexivity in the pursuit of supporting agentic beliefs, and which provides my answer to the final research question. I invite others to think with me, in the implications for future research and practice, and humbly submit to the difficulty of an agential education through the words of Maxine Greene.

> Of course, it is difficult to affirm the value of plurality and difference while working to build a community of persons who have a feeling of agency, who are ready to speak for themselves. Yet, once the distinctiveness of the many voices in a classroom is attended to, the importance of identifying shared beliefs will be heightened. Again, these beliefs can only emerge out of dialogue and regard for others in their freedom, in their possibilities (Greene, 1995, p.42).

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A: Data Collection Protocol

Date/Time: October 6, 2015 at 6:30pm

Location: 215 North Johnson Ave. San Marcos, TX 78666

Interviewee: Mr. Thomas H. Waggoner

Interviewer: Christopher T. F. Hanson

(Present consent form)

Review purpose of study: The intent of the research is to understand the views and experiences of fine arts teachers and administrators with accountability. Specifically, this study will examine how and in what ways one has been successful or faced challenges in their position/environment specifically as it relates to accountability measures in public education and teacher/administrator training.

Questions:

1. Would you briefly discuss your background in the fine arts and your current position?
2. Do you believe there are issues of accountability in fine arts education?

3a. What are some of the accountability issues you recognize in fine arts education?
3b. What are some of the concerns or issues you recognize in fine arts?
4. How are these issues currently being addressed?
5. What is our opinion for state standardized assessment for fine arts?
6. What do you believe will be the next “big” moment/event for fine arts education in Texas?
7. Do you believe fine arts can be used to effect school improvement?
8. Do you see the STEM to STEAM initiative as a school improvement model?
9. What have been your experiences with STEAM initiatives?

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

Consent Form to Participate in Research

Title of Project: The effects of accountability on fine arts teacher agency

Principal Investigator: Christopher T. F. Hanson

215 North Johnson

San Marcos, TX

Christopher.hanson@smcisd.net

832-866-8355

Texas State University - San Marcos IRB approval #

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the effects of accountability on fine arts teacher agency. The intent of this research is to understand your views and experiences as a fine arts teacher and administrator. Specifically, this study will examine how and in what ways you have been successful or faced challenges in this position/environment specifically as it relates to accountability measures in public education and teacher/administrator training.

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will participate in an initial interview lasting for approximately 1 hour. In the interview, you will be asked to discuss your views and experiences of accountability as a fine arts teacher and administrator. For instance, you will be asked questions like the ones that follow: What is your history or background in fine arts education? What are your experiences with accountability measures for fine arts education? What do you identify as issues in fine arts education? The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. Your participation is voluntary and as such, you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

RISKS: In reflecting and talking about your experience as fine arts teacher and administrator you may become uncomfortable with unhappy experiences or memories recalled. However, you may elect to not answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy, and still remain a participant in the research. There are no known psychological or physiological risks associated with participating in this research. However, some of the questions may be considered sensitive. Participants are not required to respond to any question that they do not feel comfortable answering. All answers will remain confidential.

BENEFITS: You may not benefit from your participation in this research. Research on the effects of accountability on fine arts teacher agency may be beneficial to other professionals and researchers in understanding the establishment and creation of accountability measures for fine arts teachers as well as teacher and administrator training

and education.

COMPENSATION: You will not be paid for participation in this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Upon your request, your name will not appear on any survey or research instruments. Your identity may be referenced in the data analysis, unless otherwise requested to remain anonymous. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the investigator's office and the principal investigator, Christopher Hanson, will have sole access. Your response(s) will appear in statistical data summaries when the data are presented in written or oral form at scientific meetings. Your name may appear in publication(s) that utilize this data, unless you have requested otherwise. All materials will be kept for three years.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty. Your withdrawal will not influence any other services to which you may be otherwise entitled.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being asked of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any concerns about my participation in this study, I may call the investigator who is asking me to participate, Christopher Hanson, at (832) 866-8355. If I have any concerns that my rights are being violated, I may contact the Director of the Office of Research Compliance at Texas State University - San Marcos, Becky Northcut at (512) 245-7975.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature **Date**

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature **Date**

APPENDIX C: Matrix of Codes Cross Referenced and Color Coded

Question 6	**Question 7**	**Question 8**	**Question 9**	**Question 10**
Who are you professionally accountable to?	*What is the best assessment of your effectiveness as a teacher?*	*How do you define accountability as a fine arts educator?*	*How does accountability affect you in executing your duties and responsibilities?*	*What is your opinion of standardized testing in fine arts?*
Principal/admin: 9, 113, 99, 97, 82, 64, 51, 33, 107, 47, 77, 106, 92, 21, 19, 17, 74, 10, 7, 5, 114, 90, 69, 66, 60, 56, 45, 35, 6, 108, 104, 93, 84, 83, 81, 79, 78, 75, 73, 72, 65, 63, 62, 50, 20, 46, 22, 14, 13, 12, 4, 110, 98, 76, 59, 54, 53, 49, 39, 15, 112, 109, 103, 94, 102, 88, 80, 71, 68, 52, 48, 43, 42, 37, 31, 30, 29, 28, 27, 18, 16, 11, 2, 111, 101, 96, 95, 89, 87, 70, 58, 57, 38, 44, 41, 40, 34, 32, 36, 8, 24, 85	Student response, engagement: 9, 86, 92, 10, 90, 56, 108, 20, 73, 13, 12, 59, 49, 15, 112, 109, 71, 68, 42, 28, 101, 100, 70,	Retention, recruitment, numbers: 9, 97, 107, 69, 19, 6, 20, 108, 110, 102, 68, 37, 96,	Too much paper work: 9, 108, 46, 110, 18, 40,	Students are over tested: 9,
Fine arts administrator, fine arts staff: 113, 64, 51, 33, 47, 61, 77, 107, 26, 19, 17, 10, 7, 114, 66, 60, 69, 56, 35, 108, 93, 83, 79, 73, 72, 50, 20, 46, 22, 14, 13, 12, 4, 110, 59, 54, 53, 39, 112, 109, 103, 88, 71, 68, 31, 30, 27, 23, 16, 2, 96, 95, 89, 87, 70, 58, 57, 38, 44, 34, 32, 36, 8, 24, 85	Observation/review by peers/professionals: 113, 26, 19, 17, 7, 114, 93, 84, 75, 73, 50, 14, 76, 55, 39, 109, 94, 30, 27, 18, 11, 96, 87, 44, 40, 85	Self-accountability, isolated: 113, 33, 114, 93, 81, 72, *53, 27, 34, 85	Self-accountability, isolated: 113, 97, 67, 107, 7, 66, 60, 84, 75, 73, 72, 63, 22, 76, 59, 54, 15, 112, 52, 48, 28, 23, 89, 44, 34, 24	You can't measure (creativity): 9, 86, 113, 51, 33, 92, 26, 45, 14, 15, 112, 103, *102, 48, 37, 29, 41,

Students and community: 67, 64, 33, 106, 92, 35, 69, 108, 46, 22, 59, 54, 53, 103, 88, 94, 80, 68, 31, 29, 2, 96, 58, 32, 8	Performances/products: 99, 67, 64, 26, 21, 5, 69, 45, 6, 104, 83, 79, 73, 13, 4, 110, 54, 53, 103, 80, 68, 43, 31, 23, 111, 96, 95, 89, 38, 32, 24	Student engagement and pedagogy: 99, 86, 51, 92, 56, 108, 104, 84, 83, 50, 14, 110, 49, 88, 71, 52, 42, 25, 11, 2, 38, 44,	Encourages improvement in pedagogy: 86, 106, 92, 17, 56, 35, 6, 83, 98, 103, 25,	May/would give the arts more respect/legitimacy: 10, 4, 110, *54, 49, 39, 25, 100, 70,		
Professional organizations: 33, 47, 106, 26, 74, 45, 6, 108, 81, 46, 55, 80, 31, 28, 27, 25, 96, 95, 89,	Competition, UIL: 82*, 64, 7, 60, 56, 45, 35, 94, 104, 79, 75, 73, 65, 62, 50, 46, 4, 110, 31, 101, 89, 87, 57, 41, 40, 34, 32, 24, 8	Winning/contests: 82, 64, 19, 63, 30, 27, 96, 58, 57, 41,	We are not held accountable to anyone: 82, *51,	UIL can be, should be, is already used: 60, 114, 56, 45, 104, 81, 79, 65, 63, 62, 50, 46, 30, 28, 16, 96, 87, 38, 34, 85		
UIL: 45, 31, 27, 25, 23, 96, 32,	Admin do not know what I teach: 107, 72, *87, *44,	Student work or products: 64, 67, 19, 17, 69, 10, 7, 75, 50, 46, 31, 25, 23, 18, 57,	Prohibits desired teaching: 33, 61, 108, 46, 110, 96, 87, 57, 40,			
Personal accountability: 110,	Student led product: 106, 53,	Meeting the TEKS: 106, 83, 4, 110, 55, 39, 103, 43, 31, 100,	Winning/contests are all that matter: *93,			
	Retention, recruitment, numbers: 21, 5, 69, 35, 77, 79, 75, 63, 46, 49, 31, 28, 111, 89, 87, 40, 32,	Admin do not know what I teach: 10, 79,	Creating future artists/musicians or supports of the arts: 63, 102,			
	Participation in professional organizations: 7, 98, 31,	Community engagement/support: 78, 22, 68, 28, 89,				
	Creating future artists/musicians or supports of the arts: 78, 49, 37, 70, 41,	Creating future artists/musicians or supports of the arts: 8, 46, 13, 110, 98, 102, 37,				
	Community engagement/support: 22, 68, 95, 89, 40,					
	TEKS: 112,					
	Self-assessment: 52,					
THEATER	BAND	ART	ORCH	DANCE	CHOIR	ELEM

APPENDIX D: Data Organized By Frequency of Codes Without Subject

Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10
Principal/Admin	*Student Response and engagement*	*Retention, recruitment, numbers*	*Too much paper work*	*Students over tested*
102	23	13	6	1
Fine arts administrator, fine arts staff	*Observation, review by peers or professionals*	*Self-accountability*	*Self-Accountability*	*(Creativity) cannot be measured*
65	26	10	25	17
Students and community	*Performances, products*	*Student engagement and pedagogy*	*Encourages improvement in pedagogy*	*May/would give the arts more respect or legitimacy*
25	31	22	11	9
Professional organizations	*Competition, contests, UIL*	*Winning, contests, UIL*	*We are not held accountable to anyone specific*	*UIL can be, should be, is already used*
19	29	10	2	20
UIL	*Admin do not know what I teach*	*Student work, performances or products*	*Prohibits desired teaching*	
7	4	15	9	
Personal accountability	*Student led projects*	*Meeting the TEKS*	*Winning, contests, competition*	
1	2	10	1	
	Retention, recruitment, numbers	*Admin do not know what I teach*	*Creating future artists/musicians or supporters of the arts*	
	17	2	2	
	Creating future artists/musicians or supporters of the arts	*Creating future artists/musicians or supporters of the arts*		
	5	7		
	Participation in professional organizations	*Community engagement and support*		
	3	5		
	Community engagement and support			
	5			
	TEKS			
	1			
	Self-assessment			
	1			

Building: SAN MARCOS HIGH

Task: T-TESS Teacher Evaluation

CHRISTOPHER HANSON

Responsible: [redacted]

T-TESS TEACHER EVALUATION

Domain 1: Planning

Dimension 1.1 Standards and Alignment

The teacher designs clear, well-organized, sequential lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and are appropriate for diverse learners.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• All rigorous and measurable goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are logically sequenced ▪ are relevant to students' prior understanding and real-world applications ▪ integrate and reinforce concepts from other disciplines ▪ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, lesson and lesson closure ▪ deepen understanding of broader unit and course objectives ▪ are vertically aligned to state standards ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners • Objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal, providing relevant and enriching extensions of the lesson • Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s).	• All measurable goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ are relevant to students' prior understanding ▪ integrate other disciplines ▪ provide appropriate time for student work, lesson and lesson closure ▪ reinforce broader unit and course objectives ▪ are vertically aligned to state standards ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners • All objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal. • Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s).	• All goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ are relevant to students ▪ provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure ▪ fit into the broader unit and course objectives ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners. • All objectives aligned to the lesson's goal. • Integration of technology	• Most goals aligned to state content standards. • Most activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ sometimes provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure • Lessons where most objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.	• Few goals aligned to state content standards. • Few activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ rarely provide time for lesson and lesson closure • Lessons where few objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.

Dimension 1.2 Data and Assessment

The teacher uses formal and informal methods to measure student progress, then manages and analyzes student data to inform instruction.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students, shares appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessment data with students to engage them in self-assessment, build awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and track their own progress. • Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals and engages with colleagues to adapt school-wide instructional strategies and goals to meet student needs while maintaining confidentiality. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students and incorporate appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessments data into lesson plans. • Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and other school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals, while maintaining student confidentiality. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students. • Consistent feedback to students, families and other school personnel while maintaining confidentiality. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of most students. • Timely feedback to students and families. • Utilization of multiple sources of student data.	• Few formal and informal assessments to monitor student progress. • Few opportunities for timely feedback to students or families. • Utilization of few sources of student data.

Dimension 1.3 Knowledge of Students

Through knowledge of students and proven practices, the teacher ensures high levels of learning, social-emotional development and achievement for all students.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge, experiences, interests and future learning expectations across content areas. • Guidance for students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills to enhance each other's learning. • Opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs to achieve high levels of academic and social-emotional success.	• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge, experiences and future learning expectations. • Guidance for students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills to enhance their own learning. • Opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs.	• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of all students.	• Most lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of most students.	• Few lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of few students.

Dimension 1.4 Activities

The teacher plans engaging, flexible lessons that encourage higher-order thinking, persistence and achievement.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed

• Opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application • Instructional groups based on the needs of all students, and allows for students to take ownership of group and individual accountability. • The ability for all students to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students and actively engage them in ownership of their learning.	• Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking and problem solving. • Instructional groups based on the needs of all students and maintains both group and individual accountability. • All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups and facilitates opportunities for student input on goals and outcomes of activities. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students.	• Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking. • Instructional groups based on the needs of all students. • All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes.	• Questions that promote limited, predictable or rote responses and encourage some complex, higher-order thinking. • Instructional groups based on the needs of most students. • Most students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and/or instructional materials that are mostly aligned to instructional purposes.	• Encourages little to no complex, higher-order thinking. • Instructional groups based on the needs of a few students. • Lack of student understanding of their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and/ or instructional materials misaligned to instructional purposes.

Domain 1: Comments and Feedback

- teacher provides rigorous goals that are aligned with the state standards
- formal and informal assessments occur daily with consistent feedback to students
- his knowledge of his students is exemplary
- the teacher uses high order thinking and problem solving to allow his students to grow and provides rigor for all regardless of their abilities

Domain 2: Instruction

2.1 Achieving Expectations

The teacher supports all learners in their pursuit of high levels of academic and social-emotional success.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that all students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Provides opportunities for students to self-monitor and self-correct mistakes. • Systematically enables students to set goals for themselves and monitor their progress over time.	• Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Anticipates student mistakes and encourages students to avoid common learning pitfalls. • Establishes systems where students take initiative of their own learning and self-monitor.	• Sets academic expectations that challenge all students. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Addresses student mistakes and follows through to ensure student mastery. • Provides students opportunities to take initiative of their own learning.	• Sets academic expectations that challenge most students. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that some students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Sometimes addresses student mistakes. • Sometimes provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.	• Sets expectations that challenge few students. • Concludes the lesson even though there is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Allows student mistakes to go unaddressed or confronts student errors in a way that discourages further effort. • Rarely provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.

Dimension 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise

The teacher uses content and pedagogical expertise to design and execute lessons aligned with state standards, related content and student needs.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches and closely related subjects. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines, content areas and real-world experience. • Consistently anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns. • Consistently provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline, the state standards, related content and within real-world scenarios.	• Conveys a depth of content knowledge that allows for differentiated explanations. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines and real-world experiences. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns. • Regularly provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.	• Conveys accurate content knowledge in multiple contexts. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings. • Provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Accurately reflects how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.	• Conveys accurate content knowledge. • Sometimes integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Sometimes anticipates possible student misunderstandings. • Sometimes provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).	• Conveys inaccurate content knowledge that leads to student confusion. • Rarely integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Does not anticipate possible student misunderstandings. • Provides few opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).

Dimension 2.3 Communication

The teacher clearly and accurately communicates to support persistence, deeper learning and effective effort.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate safely and effectively using a variety of tools and methods with the teacher and their peers. • Uses possible student misunderstandings at strategic points in lessons to highlight misconceptions and inspire exploration and discovery. • Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that require a deeper learning and broader understanding of the objective of the lesson. • Skillfully balances wait time, questioning techniques and integration	• Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate effectively, including the use of visual tools and technology, with the teacher and their peers. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops techniques to address obstacles to learning. • Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke thought and discussion. • Skillfully uses probing questions to clarify, elaborate and extend learning.	• Establishes classroom practices that provide opportunities for most students to communicate effectively with the teacher and their peers. • Recognizes student misunderstandings and responds with an array of teaching techniques to clarify concepts. • Provides explanations that are clear and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks remember, understand and apply level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke discussion. • Uses probing	• Leads lessons with some opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration. • Recognizes student misunderstandings but has a limited ability to respond. • Uses verbal and written communication that is generally clear with minor errors of grammar. • Asks remember and understand level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson but do little to amplify discussion.	• Directs lessons with little opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration. • Is sometimes unaware of or unresponsive to student misunderstandings. • Uses verbal communication that is characterized by inaccurate grammar; written communication that has inaccurate spelling, grammar, punctuation or structure. • Rarely asks questions, or asks questions that do not amplify discussion or align to the objective of the lesson.

of student responses to support student-directed learning. • Skillfully provokes and guides discussion to pique curiosity and inspire student-led learning of meaningful and challenging content.	• Provides wait time when questioning students.	questions to clarify and elaborate learning.		

Dimension 2.4 Differentiation

The teacher differentiates instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Adapts lessons with a wide variety of instructional strategies to address individual needs of all students. • Consistently monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Always provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Consistently prevents student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students.	• Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. • Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Proactively minimizes student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students.	• Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. • Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and responds to student learning or social/ emotional needs.	• Adapts lessons to address some student needs. • Sometimes monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content. • Sometimes recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and minimally responds to student learning or social/emotional needs.	• Provides one-size-fits-all lessons without meaningful differentiation. • Rarely monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Rarely provides differentiated instructional methods and content. • Does not recognize when students become confused or disengaged, or does not respond appropriately to student learning or social/ emotional needs.

Dimension 2.5 Monitor and Adjust

The teacher formally and informally collects, analyzes and uses student progress data and makes needed lesson adjustments.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Systematically gathers input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities or pacing to respond to differences in student needs. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Uses discreet and explicit checks for understanding through questioning and academic feedback.	• Utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities and pacing to respond to differences in student needs. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Continually checks for understanding through purposeful questioning and academic feedback.	• Consistently invites input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Monitors student behavior and responses for engagement and understanding.	• Sometimes utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Adjusts some instruction within a limited range. • Sees student behavior but misses some signs of disengagement. • Is aware of most student responses but misses some	• Rarely utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Persists with instruction or activities that do not engage students. • Generally does not link student behavior and responses with student engagement and understanding. • Makes no attempts to engage students who appear

		clues of misunderstanding.	disengaged or disinterested.

Domain 2: Comments and Feedback

- the teacher provides opportunities for his students to self-monitor and works with each student to set goals
- he has extensive content knowledge and provides many opportunities for his students to use their skills to be able to perform in the community and or venues

Domain 3: Learning Environment

Dimension 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures

The teacher organizes a safe, accessible and efficient classroom.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that primarily rely on student leadership and responsibility. • Students take primary leadership and responsibility for managing student groups, supplies, and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and thoughtfully designed to engage, challenge and inspire students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives.	• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that she or he implements effortlessly. • Students take some responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students.	• All procedures, routines and transitions are clear and efficient. • Students actively participate in groups, manage supplies and equipment with very limited teacher direction. • The classroom is safe and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to most students.	• Most procedures, routines and transitions provide clear direction but others are unclear and inefficient. • Students depend on the teacher to direct them in managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and accessible to most students, but is disorganized and cluttered.	• Few procedures and routines guide student behavior and maximize learning. Transitions are characterized by confusion and inefficiency. • Students often do not understand what is expected of them. • The classroom is unsafe, disorganized and uncomfortable. • Some students are not able to access materials.

Dimension 3.2 Managing Student Behavior

The teacher establishes, communicates and maintains clear expectations for student behavior.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Consistently monitors behavior subtly, reinforces positive behaviors appropriately and intercepts misbehavior fluidly. • Students and the teacher create, adopt and maintain classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently encourages and monitors student behavior subtly and responds to misbehavior swiftly. • Most students know, understand and respect classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system proficiently. • Most students meet expected classroom behavior standards.	• Inconsistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system. • Student failure to meet expected classroom behavior standards interrupts learning.	• Rarely or unfairly enforces campus or classroom behavior standards. • Student behavior impedes learning in the classroom.

Dimension 3.3 Classroom Culture

The teacher leads a mutually respectful and collaborative class of actively engaged learners.
Standards Basis: 1E, 1F, 3B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5D
Sources of Evidence: Formal Observation, Classroom

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Consistently engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests and abilities to create a positive rapport amongst students. • Students collaborate positively and encourage each other's efforts and achievements.	• Engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning, sometimes adjusting lessons based on student interests and abilities. • Students collaborate positively with each other and the teacher.	• Engages all students in relevant, meaningful learning. • Students work respectfully individually and in groups.	• Establishes a learning environment where most students are engaged in the curriculum. • Students are sometimes disrespectful of each other.	• Establishes a learning environment where few students are engaged in the curriculum. • Students are disrespectful of each other and of the teacher.

Domain 3: Comments and Feedback

- class routines are established and students are aware of the expectations for behavior
- teacher consistently monitors and encourages all students regardless of ability
- provides engaging and exciting lessons and opportunities for students

Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities

Dimension 4.1 Professional Demeanor and Ethics *The teacher meets district expectations for attendance, professional appearance, decorum, procedural, ethical, legal and statutory responsibilities..*

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. • Models all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) across the campus and district for educators and students. • Advocates for the needs of all students in the classroom and campus.	• Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. • Models all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) within the classroom. • Advocates for the needs of all students in the classroom.	• Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. • Meets all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors). • Advocates for the needs of students in the classroom.	• Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. • Meets most professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors).	• Fails to meet the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. • Meets few professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) or violates legal requirements.

Dimension 4.2 Goal Setting

The teacher reflects on his/her practice.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Consistently sets, modifies and meets short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection, peer and supervisor feedback, contemporary research and analysis of student learning. • Implements substantial changes in	• Sets some short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection, peer and supervisor feedback, contemporary research and analysis of student learning. • Meets all professional goals resulting in improvement in	• Sets short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection and supervisor feedback. • Meets all	• Sets short-term goals based on self-assessment. • Meets most professional goals resulting in some visible	• Sets low or ambiguous goals unrelated to student needs or self-assessment. • Meets few professional goals and persists in instructional

practice resulting in significant improvement in student performance.	practice and student performance.	professional goals resulting in improvement in practice and student performance.	changes in practice.	practices that remain substantially unimproved over time.

Dimension 4.3 Professional Development

The teacher enhances the professional community.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Leads colleagues collaboratively in and beyond the school to identify professional development needs through detailed data analysis and self-reflection. • Seeks resources and collaboratively fosters faculty knowledge and skills. • Develops and fulfills the school and district improvement plans through professional learning communities, grade- or subject- level team leadership, committee leadership or other opportunities beyond the campus.	• Leads colleagues collaboratively on campus to identify professional development needs through self-reflection. • Fosters faculty knowledge and skills in support of the school improvement plan through professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team leadership, committee membership or other opportunities beyond the campus.	• Collaboratively practices in all scheduled professional development activities, campus professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team membership, committee membership or other opportunities.	• Engages in most scheduled professional development activities, professional learning communities, committee, grade- or subject-level team meetings as directed.	• Engages in few professional development activities, professional learning communities or committees to improve professional practice.

Dimension 4.4 School Community Involvement

The teacher demonstrates leadership with students, colleagues, and community members in the school, district and community through effective communication and outreach.

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
• Systematically contacts parents/ guardians regarding students' academic and social/ emotional growth through various methods. • Initiates collaborative efforts that enhance student learning and growth. • Leads students, colleagues, families and community members toward reaching the mission, vision and goals of the school.	• Systematically contacts parents/ guardians regarding students' academic and social/emotional growth through various methods. • Joins colleagues in collaborative efforts that enhance student learning and welfare. • Clearly communicates the mission, vision and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families, and other community members.	• Contacts parents/ guardians regularly regarding students' academic and social/ emotional growth. • Actively participates in all school outreach activities • Communicates the mission, vision and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families.	• Contacts parents/ guardians in accordance with campus policy. • Attends most required school outreach activities. • Communicates school goals to students, parents and families.	• Contacts parents generally about disciplinary matters. • Attends few required school outreach activities.

Domain 4: Comments and Feedback

- the teacher behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics
- the teacher advocates for his students
- teacher is consistently setting short and long term goals
- the teacher actively participates in all school activities
- parents are contacted on a regular basis to inform of student progress

RUBRIC WORD BANK with examples of qualifiers that are interchangeably used:					
DIMENSION EXAMPLE	DISTINGUISHED	ACCOMPLISHED	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT CLASSROOM CULTURE	ALL	ALL	ALL	MOST	FEW
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR	CONSISTENTLY	CONSISTENTLY	CONSISTENTLY	INCONSISTENTLY	RARELY
INSTRUCTION ACHIEVING EXPECTATIONS	ALL	MOST	MOST	SOME	FEW
INSTRUCTION CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE	CONSISTENTLY	REGULARLY	DOES(ACTION)	SOMETIMES	FEW
INSTRUCTION DIFFERENTIATION	ALWAYS	REGULARLY	DOES(ACTION)	SOMETIMES	DOES NOT(ACTION)
	MOVES TO STUDENT CENTERED ACTIONS	MOVES TO STUDENT CENTERED ACTIONS	FOCUSES ON MOSTLY TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS	FOCUSES ON TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS	FOCUSES ON TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

Evaluator: Click **Save Progress** to save the edits you have made without sharing the document or moving to signatures. You may click the **Form Sharing** button to send a copy of this form to the Direct Report prior to signatures. Click the **Save and Submit** button only when you have completed all edits and are ready to digitally sign the document.

Attached Workflow — Educator Signature

Current Status — Approved

Workflow Steps

1 Signed by CHRISTOPHER HANSON on 05/16/2018 at 1:51 PM
Signature: CTFH

Building: SAN MARCOS HIGH

Task: T-TESS Observation Rubric

CHRISTOPHER HANSON

Responsible: [redacted]

T-TESS OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Domain 1: Planning

	Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
Dimension 1.1 Standards and Alignment The teacher designs clear, well-organized, sequential lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and are appropriate for diverse learners.	• All rigorous and measurable goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are logically sequenced ▪ are relevant to students' prior understanding and real-world applications ▪ integrate and reinforce concepts from other disciplines ▪ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, lesson and lesson closure ▪ deepen understanding of broader unit and course objectives ▪ are vertically aligned to state standards ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners • Objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal, providing relevant and enriching extensions of the lesson • Integration of technology	• All measurable goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ are relevant to students' prior understanding ▪ integrate other disciplines ▪ provide appropriate time for student work, lesson and lesson closure ▪ reinforce broader unit and course objectives ▪ are vertically aligned to state standards ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners • All objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal. • Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s).	• All goals aligned to state content standards. • All activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ are relevant to students ▪ provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure ▪ fit into the broader unit and course objectives ▪ are appropriate for diverse learners. • All objectives aligned to the lesson's goal. • Integration of technology	• Most goals aligned to state content standards. • Most activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ sometimes provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure • Lessons where most objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.	• Few goals aligned to state content standards. • Few activities, materials and assessments that: ▪ are sequenced ▪ rarely provide time for lesson and lesson closure • Lessons where few objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.

	to enhance mastery of goal(s).				
Dimension 1.2 Data and Assessment The teacher uses formal and informal methods to measure student progress, then manages and analyzes student data to inform instruction.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students, shares appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessment data with students to engage them in self-assessment, build awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and track their own progress. • Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals and engages with colleagues to adapt school-wide instructional strategies and goals to meet student needs while maintaining confidentially. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students and incorporate appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessments data into lesson plans. • Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and other school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals, while maintaining student confidentiality. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students. • Consistent feedback to students, families and other school personnel while maintaining confidentiality. • Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies.	• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of most students. • Timely feedback to students and families. • Utilization of multiple sources of student data.	• Few formal and informal assessments to monitor student progress. • Few opportunities for timely feedback to students or families. • Utilization of few sources of student data.
Dimension 1.3 Knowledge of Students Through knowledge of students and proven practices, the teacher ensures high levels of learning, social-emotional development and achievement for all students.	• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge, experiences, interests and future learning expectations across content areas. • Guidance for students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills to enhance each other's learning. • Opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs to achieve high levels of academic and social-emotional success.	• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge, experiences and future learning expectations. • Guidance for students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills to enhance their own learning. • Opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs.	• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of all students.	• Most lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of most students.	• Few lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge and experiences. • Adjustments to address strengths and gaps in background knowledge, life experiences and skills of few students.
Dimension 1.4 Activities The teacher plans	• Opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-	• Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking and problem solving. • Instructional groups	• Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking. • Instructional groups based on the needs of	• Questions that promote limited, predictable or rote responses and encourage some complex, higher-order thinking.	• Encourages little to no complex, higher-order thinking. • Instructional groups based on the needs of a few students.

engaging, flexible lessons that encourage higher-order thinking, persistence and achievement.	world application • Instructional groups based on the needs of all students, and allows for students to take ownership of group and individual accountability. • The ability for all students to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students and actively engage them in ownership of their learning.	based on the needs of all students and maintains both group and individual accountability. • All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups and facilitates opportunities for student input on goals and outcomes of activities. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students.	all students. • All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes.	• Instructional groups based on the needs of most students. • Most students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and/or instructional materials that are mostly aligned to instructional purposes.	• Lack of student understanding of their individual roles within instructional groups. • Activities, resources, technology and/or instructional materials misaligned to instructional purposes.

Domain 1: What to Look For

Additional comments about Domain 1: Planning

TEK(S): The lesson should cover all four strands of the Performing Arts TEKS (Critical Evaluation, Creative Expression and Response, Historical and Cultural Relevance, and Foundations (Music Literacy)). I included a link to the CEDFA website that provides additional details on how the performing arts TEKS are designed and implemented. Let me know if you have any questions.

Learning Objective: "The student will demonstrate foundational music skills in literacy and performance, in the process of learning through performance of prescribed repertoire."

Language Objective: "Students will write a *reflection* (CE & R) in their journals to the following prompt: Write a description of the (designated piece) using similes and metaphors."

Essential Question: "What techniques do I use to realize my literary description of the piece we are working on?"

Exit Ticket/Closing Task: Students will perform a self evaluation to determine if their literary description, or that of their peers, for the designated piece of music was realized in their performance.

Domain 2: Instruction

	Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
Dimension 2.1 Achieving Expectations The teacher supports all learners in their pursuit of high levels of	• Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves. • Persists with the lesson until there is	• Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves. • Persists with the	• Sets academic expectations that challenge all students. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate	• Sets academic expectations that challenge most students. • Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that some students demonstrate	• Sets expectations that challenge few students. • Concludes the lesson even though there is evidence that few students demonstrate

academic and social-emotional success.	evidence that all students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Provides opportunities for students to self-monitor and self-correct mistakes. • Systematically enables students to set goals for themselves and monitor their progress over time.	lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. • Anticipates student mistakes and encourages students to avoid common learning pitfalls. • Establishes systems where students take initiative of their own learning and self-monitor.	mastery of the objective. • Addresses student mistakes and follows through to ensure student mastery. • Provides students opportunities to take initiative of their own learning.	mastery of the objective. • Sometimes addresses student mistakes. • Sometimes provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.	mastery of the objective. • Allows student mistakes to go unaddressed or confronts student errors in a way that discourages further effort. • Rarely provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.
Dimension 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise The teacher uses content and pedagogical expertise to design and execute lessons aligned with state standards, related content and student needs.	• Displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches and closely related subjects. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines, content areas and real-world experience. • Consistently anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns. • Consistently provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline, the state standards, related content and within real-world scenarios.	• Conveys a depth of content knowledge that allows for differentiated explanations. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines and real-world experiences. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns. • Regularly provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.	• Conveys accurate content knowledge in multiple contexts. • Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings. • Provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based). • Accurately reflects how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.	• Conveys accurate content knowledge. • Sometimes integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Sometimes anticipates possible student misunderstandings. • Sometimes provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).	• Conveys inaccurate content knowledge that leads to student confusion. • Rarely integrates learning objectives with other disciplines. • Does not anticipate possible student misunderstandings. • Provides few opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).
Dimension 2.3 Communication The teacher clearly and accurately communicates to support persistence,	• Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate safely and effectively using a variety of tools and methods with the teacher and their peers.	• Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate effectively, including the use of visual tools and technology, with	• Establishes classroom practices that provide opportunities for most students to communicate effectively with the teacher and their peers.	• Leads lessons with some opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration. • Recognizes student misunderstandings but has a limited	• Directs lessons with little opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration. • Is sometimes unaware of or unresponsive to student

deeper learning and effective effort.	• Uses possible student misunderstandings at strategic points in lessons to highlight misconceptions and inspire exploration and discovery. • Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that require a deeper learning and broader understanding of the objective of the lesson. • Skillfully balances wait time, questioning techniques and integration of student responses to support student-directed learning. • Skillfully provokes and guides discussion to pique curiosity and inspire student-led learning of meaningful and challenging content.	the teacher and their peers. • Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops techniques to address obstacles to learning. • Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke thought and discussion. • Skillfully uses probing questions to clarify, elaborate and extend learning. • Provides wait time when questioning students.	• Recognizes student misunderstandings and responds with an array of teaching techniques to clarify concepts. • Provides explanations that are clear and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct. • Asks remember, understand and apply level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke discussion. • Uses probing questions to clarify and elaborate learning.	ability to respond. • Uses verbal and written communication that is generally clear with minor errors of grammar. • Asks remember and understand level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson but do little to amplify discussion.	misunderstandings. • Uses verbal communication that is characterized by inaccurate grammar; written communication that has inaccurate spelling, grammar, punctuation or structure. • Rarely asks questions, or asks questions that do not amplify discussion or align to the objective of the lesson.
Dimension 2.4 Differentiation The teacher differentiates instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs.	• Adapts lessons with a wide variety of instructional strategies to address individual needs of all students. • Consistently monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Always provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Consistently prevents student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/ emotional needs of all students.	• Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. • Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Proactively minimizes student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students.	• Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. • Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. • Recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and responds to student learning or social/emotional needs.	• Adapts lessons to address some student needs. • Sometimes monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content. • Sometimes recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and minimally responds to student learning or social/emotional needs.	• Provides one-size-fits-all lessons without meaningful differentiation. • Rarely monitors the quality of student participation and performance. • Rarely provides differentiated instructional methods and content. • Does not recognize when students become confused or disengaged, or does not respond appropriately to student learning or social/emotional needs.

Dimension 2.5 Monitor and Adjust The teacher formally and informally collects, analyzes and uses student progress data and makes needed lesson adjustments.	• Systematically gathers input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities or pacing to respond to differences in student needs. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Uses discreet and explicit checks for understanding through questioning and academic feedback.	• Utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities and pacing to respond to differences in student needs. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Continually checks for understanding through purposeful questioning and academic feedback.	• Consistently invites input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. • Monitors student behavior and responses for engagement and understanding.	• Sometimes utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Adjusts some instruction within a limited range. • Sees student behavior but misses some signs of disengagement. • Is aware of most student responses but misses some clues of misunderstanding.	• Rarely utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. • Persists with instruction or activities that do not engage students. • Generally does not link student behavior and responses with student engagement and understanding. • Makes no attempts to engage students who appear disengaged or disinterested.

Domain 2: What to Look For

Additional comments about Domain 2: Instruction

TEACHER: At the beginning of the observation period, the teacher was moving about the classroom talking with students and addressing any needs that they may have in preparation for the day's lesson. The students entered into the classroom and taking their places at their seats with their instruments. As the bell rung, the teacher moved into their power zone at the podium and gave instructions on the lesson and agenda for the day. The teacher then a student leader continue with the announcemnets and other housing keping duties of the class. The teacher then began the instruction of for the day by informing students that "Today is...Students respond..."Writing Wednesday!" The students that had not done so, picked up their journals in preparation for the lesson. The teacher then gave them their writing prompt..."Tell me what are similes and metaphors used for? He held a brief discussion and then had the students think about it for a few minutes. He then led a discussion on the prompt. The teacher then led the students to "think about the 3rd movement" and then write about it. He gave them the instruction to thjink first then write. A 5 minute time limit was given. The teacher walked about the classroom while students wrote. At the end of the 5 minutes, the teacher had the students report out what they wrote. He then led them through a brief discussion on their writings. The teacher then had students discuss, listen, and imagine the musical piece played in major vs minor. He led the students through their own assessment and discussion of the piece. The teacher challenged the students to play in an "endearing" manner..."play it like you broke your favorite toy." He told the students that "the director will challenge you by using similes and metaphors." The teacher provided similar opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves through various questioning strategies and assessment opportunities guided by the teacher through these activities.

STUDENTS: As the students entered the classroom, they were greeted by the teacher in preparation for class. They went and began taking their seats with their instruments. The teacher asked a student leader to begin announcem,ents and lesson expectations at the bell, the students all became attentive and followed along with the instructions. The teacher then began instruction and students participated actively in instruction and discussion The students were able to follow along with the instruction as the teacher led them through a series of questioning and assessments of each passage played. The students all participated in the discussion and were able to give input on each question or assessment. There were very little to no redirection for discipline infractions during the observation period.

Domain 3: Learning Environment

	Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
Dimension 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures The teacher organizes a safe, accessible and efficient classroom.	• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that primarily rely on student leadership and responsibility. • Students take primary leadership and responsibility for managing student groups, supplies, and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and thoughtfully designed to engage, challenge and inspire students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives.	• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that she or he implements effortlessly. • Students take some responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students.	• All procedures, routines and transitions are clear and efficient. • Students actively participate in groups, manage supplies and equipment with very limited teacher direction. • The classroom is safe and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to most students.	• Most procedures, routines and transitions provide clear direction but others are unclear and inefficient. • Students depend on the teacher to direct them in managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and accessible to most students, but is disorganized and cluttered.	• Few procedures and routines guide student behavior and maximize learning. Transitions are characterized by confusion and inefficiency. • Students often do not understand what is expected of them. • The classroom is unsafe, disorganized and uncomfortable. • Some students are not able to access materials.
Dimension 3.2 Managing Student Behavior The teacher establishes, communicates and maintains clear expectations for student behavior.	• Consistently monitors behavior subtly, reinforces positive behaviors appropriately and intercepts misbehavior fluidly. • Students and the teacher create, adopt and maintain classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently encourages and monitors student behavior subtly and responds to misbehavior swiftly. • Most students know, understand and respect classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system proficiently. • Most students meet expected classroom behavior standards.	• Inconsistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system. • Student failure to meet expected classroom behavior standards interrupts learning.	• Rarely or unfairly enforces campus or classroom behavior standards. • Student behavior impedes learning in the classroom.
Dimension 3.3 Classroom Culture The teacher leads a mutually respectful and collaborative class of actively engaged learners.	• Consistently engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests and abilities to create a positive rapport amongst students. • Students collaborate positively and encourage each other's efforts and achievements.	• Engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning, sometimes adjusting lessons based on student interests and abilities. • Students collaborate positively with each other and the teacher.	• Engages all students in relevant, meaningful learning. • Students work respectfully individually and in groups.	• Establishes a learning environment where most students are engaged in the curriculum. • Students are sometimes disrespectful of each other.	• Establishes a learning environment where few students are engaged in the curriculum. • Students are disrespectful of each other and of the teacher.

Domain 3: What to Look For

Additional comments about Domain 3: Learning Environment

The teacher had established and used effective routines, transitions and procedures that he and the students implemented effortlessly. The students took responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. The classroom was safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students. The teacher consistently engaged his students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests and abilities to create a

positive rapport amongst students. The students collaborate positively and encourage each other's efforts and achievements.

Area of Reinforcement

Domain 1: Planning

- [ ] 1.1 Standards and Alignment (SA)
- [ ] 1.2 Data and Assessment (DA)
- [ ] 1.3 Knowledge of Students (KS)
- [ ] 1.4 Activities (ACT)

Domain 2: Instruction

- [ ] 2.1 Achieving Expectations (AE)
- [ ] 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise (CKE)
- [ ] 2.3 Communication (COM)
- [ ] 2.4 Differentiation (DIF)
- [ ] 2.5 Monitor and Adjust (MA)

Domain 3: Learning Environment

- [x] 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures (ERP)
- [ ] 3.2 Managing Student Behavior (MSB)
- [ ] 3.3 Classroom Culture (CC)

Objectives

Area of Reinforcement: (3.1) Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures (ERP)

Self-Analysis Question: How do you ensure that routines, peocedures and transitions are effecient in order to maximize student learning? How do you build safety in the classroom, promoting open communication and/or collaboration?

Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures: During the transition periods, all students moved without any redirection or prompting from teacher. There was very minimal to no instructional time lost during this transition period. During this evaluation period, there were very little to no behavioral issues observed. Students were on task, including while they worked independently and while the teacher or student leader were working with them. Students all communicated in a respectful manner with each other and their teacher. The classroom environment is very open and inviting to all students. The teacher used the whole room as his power zone and kept moving around the room in an effort to answer any misunderstandings and to diffuse any potential behavior issues.

Area of Refinement

Domain 1: Planning

- [ ] 1.1 Standards and Alignment (SA)
- [x] 1.2 Data and Assessment (DA)
- [ ] 1.3 Knowledge of Students (KS)
- [ ] 1.4 Activities (ACT)

Domain 2: Instruction

- [ ] 2.1 Achieving Expectations (AE)
- [ ] 2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise (CKE)
- [ ] 2.3 Communication (COM)
- [ ] 2.4 Differentiation (DIF)
- [ ] 2.5 Monitor and Adjust (MA)

Domain 3: Learning Environment

- [ ] 3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures (ERP)
- [ ] 3.2 Managing Student Behavior (MSB)
- [ ] 3.3 Classroom Culture (CC)

Objectives

Area of Refinement: 1.2 Data and Assessment (DA)

Self Analysis Question: What assessment data was examined to inform this lesson? How will your assessment data help you identify student strengths and areas of improvement?

Evidence: The teacher did not present any information describing their analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies. However, it was evident that the teacher knew his students and had them placed in parts and a level that they were able to perform succesfully in.

Recommendation: Research *Using Data in a Music Classoom* and see what you find...here is an example..."Educators can ask students to play their parts in class to understand who needs additional work. Many music teachers do this already without realizing it, and data collection simply means recording the results and analyzing them later. Solo performance and listening activities also give students more confidence. When they can play their parts for their peers, they can feel better auditioning for better parts or playing in a live recital."

Attached Workflow Educator Signature

Current Status Approved

Workflow Steps

1 Signed by CHRISTOPHER HANSON on 04/25/2019 at 11:08 PM

Signature: CTFH
Comments: Thank you for your comments. I look forward to discussing the observation with you in person to clarify some of the things you observed.

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